

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 06826458 3



ZK  
Pitts-<sup>atree</sup>











THE

# PITTS-STREET CHAPEL

## LECTURES.

DELIVERED IN BOSTON BY CLERGYMEN OF SIX DIFFERENT  
DENOMINATIONS, DURING THE WINTER OF 1858.

“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the  
hope that is in you.” — 1 Pet. iii. 15.

---

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN P. JEWETT AND COMPANY.

CLEVELAND, OHIO:

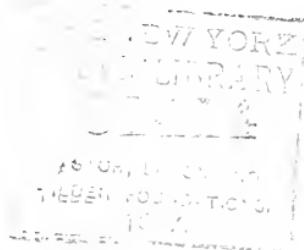
HENRY P. B. JEWETT.

1858.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by

JOHN P. JEWETT AND COMPANY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.



LITHOTYPED BY COWLES AND COMPANY,

At the Office of the American Stereotype Company,

PHÆNIX BUILDING, BOSTON.

## INTRODUCTION.

---

IN Boston, ten of the Unitarian Societies unite — under the name of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches — to support Free Chapels, and to send ministers to those having none. As these ministers are limited to no class, they are called Ministers-at-large. Connected with the Ministry-at-large, is Pitts-Street Chapel.

The “Pitts-Street Chapel Associates,” a society of men, last year invited ministers from six denominations to preach at the Chapel from the text, “What shall I do to be saved?” This course of sermons was eminently successful as to attendance and results. This year the same association invited clergymen from six denominations to preach a series of sermons in which each should plainly declare why he is compelled to hold and teach his creed. The interest in this course was so wide spread and intense, that a call has been made for the publication of the same. Hence the issue of the present volume.

By having and publishing this course, some have been led to ask as to the Chapel: “What is your distinctive belief? or have you none?” We answer, that we have a distinctive and a distinct belief, which may be hinted at here.

I.—1. We find no command as to the form of church government in Scripture, and therefore adopt that which we prefer, namely: the Congregational. 2. We adopt sprinkling as the mode of baptism, not because we recognize it as the precise form used by our Lord, but because it obeys his command completely. 3. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper we hold open to all Christ’s disciples.

II.—1. As to natural theology, and matters pertaining to reason, in common with all others, we study nature and man. 2. As to revealed theology, while we do not hold to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, still, the Bible is our only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. 3. We accept it with devout gratitude, not as a substitute for reason, or a fetter upon reason, but as a gift from God in matters which our reason cannot reach. 4. We acknowledge no authority for interpreting the Word. We protest against the authority of the Latin Church, the Greek

Church, the English Church, the Scotch Church, the Methodist Church, the Unitarian Church, and of every other church. We thank each and all of these churches for aid; but for ourselves we must be left free to understand the Master from the study of his own recorded words. Our creed is the Bible.

**III.**—1. We accept at once every doctrine which Christ uttered. His word to us is infallible verity. 2. Did we then find the doctrine of the three persons in One Godhead taught by him, we should at once accept that. We do not. The simple Unity of God alone, is taught from Genesis to Revelation. Hence our name, Unitarian. 3. Jesus is not to us a mere man. He is the Son of God; not, however, God the Son. He is our Lord, not our God. As Paul says: “To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.” He is our Saviour. 4. The Holy Spirit of God we believe to be, not a separate person in the Godhead, but God’s spirit. The Spirit is our sanctifier.

**IV.**—1. Man is born, affected as to his constitutional peculiarities, by the good or evil of his ancestors; but as to character, he has none at birth. An infant, then, is neither saint nor sinner; neither to be praised nor blamed. 2. Yet all men sin. However moral, in the popular sense of that word, a person may be, he nevertheless needs regeneration. 3. This new birth is produced by the Spirit of God operating upon the heart. Men thereby become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

**V.**—1. Immortality, the Providence of God, Answer to Prayer, Forgiveness of Sin, and the like, are made sure to us through Jesus; and 2. through faith in him are rendered efficacious to everlasting life. 3. The unregenerate are not only living in darkness and sorrow here, but can have nothing but “a fearful looking for of judgment” hereafter.

While we have no written or printed creed, in general we agree in the above particulars. If, however, any differ, we aim to diminish naught of brotherly kindness, but consider such, and all, “to provoke them to love and good works.” Somewhat, however, should be said with more especial reference to the origin and purpose of this course of Lectures.

There is in the world a Christian Church. It is composed, not of theologians, but of the faithful. In this Christian Church are many families, such as Episcopalian, Trinitarian, Unitarian, and the like. Each of these families demands that the whole heart shall be given to God, and entireness of faith be had in the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet they do not agree in matters of doctrine, church organization, or ritual. How shall true Christian fellowship pervade all these many families of the Church? Simply by letting the holy spirit fill every member of the whole body, making all one in Christ. Not at all, on the one hand, by lightly es-

teeming what we understand to be the Master's command ; nor, on the other, by underestimating in the least another's intelligence, morality, faith or piety. That which is and which remains the same through all ages, in all branches of the church, in each pious heart, is not dogma, but faith. Out of that rather than out of his theological head can one discern a brother in Christ. The Pitts-Street Chapel easily finds brethren grouped in other buildings and under other names. The spirit of Christ is in them — “the tree is known by its fruits.” It therefore gives them fellowship. Not by pulpit exchanges altogether ; not by sitting with them at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper altogether ; but by uniting with them in the love and service of the same God and Lord ; in receiving from them knowledge and wisdom ; in being quickened by their devotion, and as far as it is able, by not only reciprocating the same, but uniting with them in every good word and work.

Let us throw aside the special case, and say,—if Christian brethren of all these various families, we would unite the whole household of faith, it must be done upon the basis of not only union in diversity, but — communion while we are separated. Let me illustrate. Our Baptist brother believes immersion to be Christ's ordained path to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We esteem the mode non-essential. Shall he for loyalty to Christ be deemed a bigot ? Shall he, from courtesy to man, invite us, being unimmersed, against his conscience ? Never. If he should, we could not respect him. He ought not from courtesy to violate what he understands to be a clear command of Heaven.

Again, our Episcopal brother believes in a supernaturally organized church. At the expense of much time and labor he traces, or thinks he does, the footprints of its march from the days of our Lord to the present time. All this seems to us fruitless labor. Shall we, therefore, demand of him, as an act of Christian charity or Christian courtesy, that he waive these fancies, cease to trace the tradition of the Fathers, throw aside his priestly orders and become Congregational ? Not at all. He cannot renounce his Episcopacy from any other considerations than conviction of being in error, without forfeiting the favor of God, angels, and all true Christians.

Once more. Our Trinitarian brother believes Jesus to be Almighty God the Son, while we believe he is the son of Almighty God. Shall we ask him for the love of charity to give up his interpretation of the Scripture, and agree with us ? He would reply, “No, I cannot do that, for Jesus himself says : ‘*All power is given unto me, in heaven and on earth.*’ Having *all power*, he is Almighty God. And, therefore, I must not agree with you, but you with me. Then we reply just as honestly, just as piously.” No : Jesus is not God, for he himself says :

"All power is *given* unto me in heaven and on earth," and therefore he cannot be Almighty God, for God never received power from any one. What then shall we do? Shall we compromise? Never. We are not partisans, but God's children—Christ's disciples. What then? We will hold and utter, each that which he receives from the Master, and seek some other basis of union.

So of all other differences. If an outward union be essential, let such as deem baptism, or any rite, Episcopacy, or any form of church organization non-essential, go into union with those who deem them essential. That will make quite a change. But is this outward union at all necessary? No one temple, at Jerusalem or anywhere else, will hold the whole Christian family. We must have many temples, and many congregations. That is just what we now have. This being so, let those who most nearly agree worship together,—and so they do. Let us also be kind and true, seeking for each other not the worst possible, but rather the best name, which generally will be the truest; Trinitarian or Unitarian, if you will; but not Infidel, if one's whole faith is in the Lord, nor Bigot, when another is loyal to his Lord's commands, even though neither may be an infallible interpreter. Moreover, let differing views be fairly represented. Who so well as an Episcopalian can truly represent Episcopacy? And so of all other denominations. Justice then demands that each shall be heard in its own defence. What is still more important, let divers doctrines be held as the interpretations of various fallible men, but not at all as conclusive proofs of religious character. Let faith in the Lord, let piety alone, be recognized as the test of discipleship. Christian fellowship would then follow. No pulpit exchanges need be made between the ministers of the many various sects, any more than between teachers of various schools. Nor every Christian sit at the same communion table, any more than all relatives at one domestic board. Each, as in so many Catholic churches, might go to his chosen place, to be taught and to worship, yet all be recognized, loved and labored with as members of "the household of faith." This is a union which may be. Is it not one which God demands? Is it not this alone that man needs?

Now to do somewhat towards forwarding this union amid diversity—this communion while separate—the Pitts Street Chapel Associates invited gentlemen to preach these sermons.

"O never more may differing judgments part  
From kindly sympathy a brother's heart;  
But linked in one, believing thousands kneel,  
And share with each the sacred joy they feel."

S. H. W.

*Rev. S. H. Winkley*

FIRST LECTURE.

BY

REV. WILLIAM R. CLARK,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
BROMFIELD STREET.



# I.

## WHY I AM A METHODIST.

---

"PROVE ALL THINGS ; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."—2 Thess. v. 21.

I QUOTE these words of the inspired apostle, merely as a motto, in proceeding to lay before you, as much at length as the limits of one discourse will allow, the reasons why I am a Methodist.

It remains to be seen whether any good will be accomplished by this. But because I can see no evil likely to result from it, I have cheerfully accepted the polite invitation of your pastor, which has brought me before you this evening.

And now I have to state, first, as a reason why I *became* a Methodist, that I was identified with this denomination by early associations, and was converted through its instrumentality.

But though this reason determined my denominational connection at the age of fifteen years, my preference now for the Methodist church is mainly based upon reasons which have since appeared upon maturer thought and protracted observation.

It is needless to say that these reasons do not embrace the notion that the church of my choice is exempt from imperfections. I look not for a people who are infallible either in doctrines, economy, or life.

But, with all her imperfections, the Methodist church has, what to my mind are distinguishing excellences, and which are the ground of my ecclesiastical preference. Indeed, the fact that I am a Methodist, implies that to my own mind Methodism compares favorably, and even advantageously, with other systems of Christian doctrine and enterprise. If, however, in presenting statistics, facts, and principles, I may seem to be boasting or drawing invidious comparisons, I shall escape the imputation of a boastful or invidious spirit, inasmuch as your pastor covets to be the scape-goat for all my sins in this regard.

I will not detain you with any protestations of catholicity, preferring you should draw your own inferences respecting this, from the tenor of my remarks, and from what you may chance to know of the branch of the church catholic which I represent.

I now address myself to your candor, while I attempt to present, as comprehensively as I may be able, the peculiarities of Methodism, pertaining to her doctrines and methods of progress, which constitute the ground of my denominational preference.

And first, as regards her doctrines, there is no one of them which is not held in a modified form by some

one of the other religious bodies. Methodism did not originate in a zeal for peculiarities.

It was christened by its enemies in a baptism of persecution, which partook much less of the nature of sprinkling than of immersion. On account of the rigidity with which its people adhered to method in the observance of religious duties, they were first derisively called Methodists. I name this historical fact just to say, that Methodism has projected no new system of theology; as a sect, it is eclectic. And yet it has a peculiarity in regard to its doctrines, which I will present, after stating succinctly what those doctrines are.

Methodists believe in the existence of one God, and that he is clearly revealed to us in the Bible under a three-fold distinction or personality — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They hold that man's nature is originally depraved, and in need of a supernatural re-creation or regeneration, and that this work is wrought by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every one who properly trusts in Christ as a personal Savior, through whose vicarious death *alone* remission of sin is granted.

They maintain that Christ has made a full atonement for the sins of all mankind, by virtue of which all who die prior to the period of accountability are saved; and that all others are in a salvable state. They insist that every accountable descendant of Adam is made absolutely free in the exercise of his moral choice,

that God holds him strictly responsible for that choice, and that subsequent to a general resurrection he will bring him to an account at a day of general judgment; that those who are then found wicked will go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous — those and those only who have accepted the offers of salvation and endured to the end — will go into life eternal.

They believe that the provisions of the gospel are adequate to the removal of all depravity from man's nature, and to keeping the nature free from all sin — "unspotted from the world" — and that it is his privilege to know beyond a doubt by the direct witness of the Spirit, that he is a child of God. They hold that there are two sacraments, and two only, instituted by divine authority — the Lord's Supper, which is a remembrancer of Christ, and is emblematical of his vicarious death — and Baptism, which is the ordinance of initiation into the visible church, and consists in the application of water to the person in any manner most convenient, by a duly authorized administrator, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This sacrament has the nature and force of a covenant on the part of the candidate himself, if he be of responsible years, or on the part of his sponsor if he be an infant. It being a sign and seal of an inward work of grace, infants — pronounced by Christ as fit subjects for the Kingdom of Heaven — are al-

entitled to it, as much as maturer Christians and for the same reason; moral fitness, and a proper guarantee for the religious training of those of an irresponsible age, being the sole conditions upon which, from its nature, it should be administered. Both these sacraments symbolize, but in no sense whatever do they convey, divine grace.

I have now set forth the doctrinal basis of Methodism. The moral structure which it rears upon that basis is its distinctive peculiarity.

In other words, I believe, and shall now attempt to show, that the church of my choice, by her peculiar view of these doctrines, and her manner of treating them, has developed a higher religious life, and a more aggressive spirit, than her sister denominations have done, or could do, by their peculiar views and treatment of them. Though in consequence of their having of late years approximated the views and spirit of Methodism, many of its peculiarities are now less marked than formerly.

In illustration of what I claim for the life and spirit of Methodism, I shall first adduce the religious experience of its founder, John Wesley. I do so, because that experience has given *birth and character* to Methodism the world over.

John Wesley was born in the year 1703, in Epworth, England, of which his father was rector. From childhood the religious element was prominent in his na-

ture, and, under the culture of intelligent and devout parents, he early developed a marked religious character. While tutor in the college at Oxford, he formed a religious society, consisting of himself, his brother Charles, and a few others, for the purpose of moral and spiritual improvement.

They adopted rigid rules for the government of their lives, visited and relieved the poor and sick, circulated the Scriptures, denied themselves every sinful amusement, fasted and prayed much, attended the means of grace regularly, and “sought to reach the highest possible spiritual attainments.”

This strict course, so unusual in college life, brought upon them “scorn, rebuke, and insult.” They were stigmatized as “Supererogation Men,” a “Reforming Club,” a “Godly Club,” a “Holy Club,” “Enthusiasts,” “Methodists,” and so on.

“The only effect of this was to stimulate their zeal, and quicken their devotion.” At the age of thirty-two years, having been previously ordained as a minister in the established church, Mr. Wesley was appointed a missionary to Georgia, being regarded as peculiarly qualified for this service, by his zeal, piety, and habits of self-denial.

On his passage out, and while in Georgia, he had frequent conversations with the Moravian brethren, from whom “he caught the first glimpses of a religious experience, which keeps the mind in peace in all

circumstances, and vanquishes the fear of death." On his return to England he declared himself convinced of the unsoundness of his religious experience. "I went to America," said he, "to convert the Indians; but O, who shall convert me! Who is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is present; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say 'to die is gain.' I left my native country to teach the Georgia Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I least of all suspected), that I who went to America to convert others, was never converted myself! This have I learned in the ends of the earth: that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and, consequently, my whole life; — (seeing it cannot be that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit) — that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of these sins, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment. I have no hope but that of being justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus. . . . The faith I want is a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven. . . . I want that faith which

none has without knowing he hath, (though many imagine they have it who have it not,) for whosoever hath it is freed from sin ; the whole “ body of sin is destroyed ” in him ; he is freed from fear, having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. And he is freed from doubt, having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him ; which Spirit beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.”

Thus quickened and feeling after God, he attended one evening a meeting where a person was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. “ About a quarter before nine,” says he, “ while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins — even mine — and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner spitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart.”

This experience, matured and expanded by incessant labor in the cause of his Master, protracted to the age of eighty-eight years, threw a moral halo around his subsequent life, and crowned his dying moments with unutterable bliss.

Emancipated from the thraldom of a blind philosophy, and stirred by the convictions and impulses of a new life, Mr. Wesley now began to proclaim a free and full salvation, as a personal experience.

Thousands were converted through his instrumentality. Hundreds of preachers were raised up, to enter the field with him; a Conference of ministers was formed, and the Methodist Church was established.

Yet this was the result of great toils and sacrifices. Mr. Wesley himself preached forty thousand sermons, travelled two hundred and twenty thousand miles, and gave to charitable and religious purposes more than \$150,000 as the proceeds of his publications, and left to the church an imperishable treasure in his published works.

To every intelligent and candid observer it must, I think, be apparent, that Methodism came into being by the birth-throes of an uncommon spiritual life.

To make this fact still more obvious I next invite your attention to the religious condition of England and America when Methodism arose.

Any one at all familiar with history, knows that an appalling ignorance of vital godliness everywhere prevailed. Deep shadows hung over the land.

Both the dissenting clergy, and those of the Established Church, were mostly unconverted men, and many of them immoral. Watts, Doddridge, and a few others were exceptions; but their light, steady and

serene as it was, but feebly struggled with the all-embracing darkness.

Let those outside the pale of Methodism, furnish you with information on that point.

Bishop Butler,— author of the celebrated Analogy,— thus mourns over the religious aspects of his country in a charge delivered to the clergy in the year 1751. “It is impossible for me, my brethren, upon our first meeting of this kind, to forbear lamenting with you the general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by every one, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons. The influence of it is wearing out of the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations on the subject. . . . As different ages have been distinguished by different sorts of particular errors and vices, the deplorable distinction of ours is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard for it in the generality of cases.”

In the advertisement to his Analogy he further says: “It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious, and, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its

having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Archbishop Secker asserts, "In this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard for religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age."

Dr. John Guise declares, "The greatest number of preachers and hearers seem contented to lay Him (Christ) aside. . . . All that is restrictively Christian, or that is peculiar to Christ, is waved, and banished, and despised."

Dr. Isaac Watts appeals to "Every one to use all just and proper efforts for *the recovery of dying religion in the world.*"

A poet contemporary with Addison, thus complements his contributions to the Spectator:

"When panting virtue her last effort made,  
You brought your Clio to the virgin's aid."

In the eye of her poets as well as her divines, the virtue of England lay gasping for breath. It requires no vivid imagination to fill up the picture which these dark outlines describe.

Let us now turn to the condition of America, when Methodism first threw its influence upon our shores, through the piety and eloquence of Whitefield.

From the history of the Great Awakening, by Mr. Tracy, you may learn that "The doctrine of a 'new

birth,' as an ascertainable change, was not generally prevalent in any communion when the revival commenced."

"The difference between the church and the world," says that author, "was fast vanishing away. Church discipline was neglected, and a growing laxness of morals was invading the churches. . . . . Occasional revivals of religion had interrupted this downward progress, and the preaching of sound doctrine had retarded it in many places, especially in Northampton; but even there it had gone on, and the hold of truth on the consciences of men was sadly diminished."

Rev. Samuel Davies, of Virginia, writes in the year 1751: "Religion has been, and in most parts of the Colony still is in a very low state. . . . . Family religion is a rarity. . . . . Vices of various kinds are triumphant, and even a form of godliness is not common."

Throughout the land the custom prevailed of admitting persons to the full communion of the churches who gave no evidence of regeneration, and the doctrine of the new birth ceased to be regarded in the administration of the ordinances. It was generally held that the ministrations of unconverted men, if "neither heretical in doctrine, nor scandalous for immorality, were valid and useful."

Whitefield published, as his belief, that the gener-

ality of preachers "talked of an unknown and unfelt Christ;" and that "the reason why the churches were so dead, was because they had dead men to preach to them."

"When the enemy" had thus "come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him," by the labors of Edwards, Tennent, Whitefield and others. The remnant of the faithful took courage and "waxed valiant for the truth." The churches were aroused, and powerful awakenings followed.

But this great revival was soon succeeded by a general declension.

Bitter controversies arose respecting it; the Courts interfered and imposed restraints upon its instrumentalities; large numbers of the most influential clergymen arrayed themselves ostensibly against its extravagances, but really against the revival itself, while the ravings of Davenport and others turned it into deep reproach.

And when Whitefield arrived here, on his second visit, various Conventions and Associations, with the Faculties of Harvard and Yale, published "Testimonies" and "Declarations" against him.

A terrible revulsion ensued. Edwards was dismissed from his charge at Northampton, and a settled gloom again beclouded the spiritual prospects of New England.

In Boston itself, the number of churches was actually less in 1785 than a half century before.\* This is a sad record for the descendants of the Puritans.

I name these historical facts, patent to every one, not to produce the impression that there was no piety in the clergy or laity of the periods referred to; but to show that an organized evangelism—a church, revival in its spirit, and missionary in its economy, was the *desideratum* of the religious interests of England and America at the time Methodism arose. And such I claim the Methodist church to be; and such it is conceded to be by intelligent and candid observers outside of its pale.

Said Dr. Morrison: "The Church of England received a mighty and hallowed impulse from the organization of Methodism." "Methodism did much," continues he, "to bring on the missionary crisis of the church; it was its glory that it seized with a giant grasp this great cardinal principle of the Apostolic ministry."

"Multitudes of genuine Christians," says Richard Cecil, "could attest, that, under whatever denomination they now proceed, they owe their first religious impressions to the labors of the Methodists."

Dr. Baird, who has long been carefully observing the religious systems of this country, thus speaks in

\* "Memorials of Methodism."

his "Religion in America." "No American Christian, who takes a comprehensive view of the progress of religion in his country, . . . . will fail to recognize in the Methodist economy, as well as in the zeal, devoted piety and efficiency of its ministry, one of the most powerful elements in the religious prosperity of the United States, as well as one of the firmest pillars of their civil and religious institutions."

Said Rev. Dr. Tyng, in an address before the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, "I come from a land where we might as well forget the proud oaks that tower in our forests, the glorious capitol we have erected in the centre of our hills, or the principles of truth and liberty we are endeavoring to disseminate, as to forget the influence of Wesleyan Methodism, and the benefits we have received thereby."

Methodism was instrumental in the conversion of more souls in her first century, than was the Apostolic church in its first century. At the close of the first century of the Christian era there were five hundred thousand Christians. At the Centennial Anniversary of Methodism in 1839, the number of her communicants was one million four hundred and twenty-three thousand.

The Methodist Church in this country was organized in the year 1784; it now numbers more than one million three hundred thousand members in full communion. Nearly all these were gathered from without the

pale of the Christian Church. Occasionally, persons converted through the instrumentality of other denominations have united with us. But while this should be admitted, it is proverbial that thousands led to Christ through Methodist instrumentalities, have gone to swell the ranks of other churches.

According to the last United States census the number of church edifices belonging to the Methodist denomination was twelve thousand four hundred and sixty-seven; aggregate accommodations, four million two hundred and nine thousand, three hundred and thirty-three. The number belonging to the Baptists, eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-one; aggregate accommodations, three million one hundred and thirty thousand, eight hundred and seventy-eight. The number belonging to the Presbyterians, four thousand five hundred and eighty-four; aggregate accommodations, two million forty thousand three hundred and sixteen. The number belonging to the Congregationalists, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four; aggregate accommodations, seven hundred and ninety-five thousand one hundred and seventy-seven. The number belonging to the Episcopalians, one thousand four hundred and twenty-two; aggregate accommodations, six hundred and twenty-five thousand two hundred and thirteen. The number belonging to the Universalists, four hundred and ninety-four; aggregate accommodations, two hundred and five thousand four

hundred and sixty-two. The number belonging to the Unitarians, two hundred and forty-three; aggregate accommodations, one hundred and thirty-seven thousand, three hundred and sixty-seven.

According to the latest reports the number of Baptist communicants is eight hundred and ninety-seven thousand seven hundred and eighteen; of Presbyterians, Old and New School, three hundred and eighty-three thousand nine hundred and forty; of Congregationalists, about two hundred and fifty thousand; of Episcopalians, one hundred and sixteen thousand two hundred ninety-five; of Methodists, one million three hundred and forty-two thousand and twenty-five.

We by no means conclude by this partial view that Methodism in every respect overshadows all her sister denominations. She has not been long enough in the field to equal some of the older ones in educational institutions, denominational literature, and foreign missionary operations. In those respects in which our brethren of other names are in advance of us, we rejoice with them, and bid them God-speed. We hope a Christian emulation will ever stimulate their utmost endeavors to keep in advance of us. But it will be admitted by all who have a reputation for candor, that while the numerical progress of Methodism is without a parallel, she has done her work well.

It becomes now an interesting inquiry, by what means under God has the Methodist Church of this

country, now only in the seventy-fifth year of her organization, taken her place in the front rank among the churches of the land in the immediate work of evangelization ? There are efficient means which she has employed in common with other denominations, such as the religious press, the Sunday School, the tract Society, and literary and theological institutions. But there are also means which Methodism has employed quite peculiar to herself. These are an earnest style of preaching certain great doctrinal truths, which I will soon name ; the greatest care to insure an experimental and practical ministry ; special appliances for securing active and growing piety among the laity ; and the itinerancy.

1. I am now to state, first, the doctrinal truths which Methodism has made prominent as a means for the awakening and conversion of men.

In the first place she has proclaimed, steadily and unqualifiedly through the pulpit and press, all men to be in a salvable state ; that all infants dying prior to accountable years are saved ; that all who become accountable may be saved, if they will comply with the prescribed conditions, and that these conditions so respect all the circumstances of each individual man, that all, whether in Christendom or in heathendom, are by the grace of God absolutely free to comply with them. In other words, Methodism understands Chris-

tianity to teach that the provisions of salvation are perfect and universal — that by means of them all mankind are unconditionally saved to a perfectly fair probation ; — in a word, that universalism is stamped upon every feature of the Christian economy, and that the only reason why all will not be saved eternally is, that some, instead of faithfully keeping the trusts committed to them, persistently prostitute their moral freedom. Our ministry have everywhere boldly held up this truth in confutation of the prevalent notions which restrict either the atonement itself, or any of the agencies for carrying out its provisions giving one individual, or one portion of the human family, an advantage over another. Their watchword has ever been —

“ Lord, I believe were sinners more  
Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,  
For all a full atonement made.”

They have declared the gates of Paradise to be open wide for all men, and by the bliss of heaven and pains of hell have urged them to enter.\*

\* The writer has no hesitation in declaring it as his individual opinion, that the conditions of human probation are such as to afford all the human race an absolutely equal opportunity to be saved. In other words, that all are equally able to keep the individual trusts committed to them, and that no one who on the great day of awards shall be found among the condemned, will be able to say, that had the circumstances beyond his control been like those of any one of the saved, he, too, would have been

They have cogently proved and illustrated by historic fact, the depravity of man, totally disenabling him for gaining a likeness to God, and fitness for heaven, by any inherent strength or virtue of his own. They have taught that the vitalizing and re-creating energies of the Holy Spirit are the sole instrumentality by which man's nature is renewed in righteousness; that man can no more secure a right state of heart by any process of moral culture, than he can lift himself to the clouds. This truth, so unwelcome to our pride, we have found after all to appeal to the deepest consciousness of the soul.

And we as a people are deeply convinced, that any system of faith, however philosophical in appearance or eloquent in its presentation, which denies or overlooks the deep, inherent corruption of man, and his need of the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, will stir but little the great heart of humanity.

Your own beloved Channing saw and felt this, and in a letter to Blanco White, dated Sept. 18, 1839, says with characteristic candor, "I would that I could look to Unitarianism with more hope. But this system was at its recent revival, a protest of the understanding against absurd dogmas, rather than the work of deep

numbered with them. He believes the Arminian view of Christian doctrine to involve this, though it would be assuming too much for the faith of others, to affirm that all the Methodists concur in this conclusion without some qualification.

religious principle, and was early paralyzed by a mixture of material philosophy, and fell too much into the hands of scholars and political reformers ; and the consequence is a want of vitality and force, which gives us little hope of accomplishing much under its present auspices or in its present form.”\*

I do not, of course, infer from these words that their author entertained the same views of the innate helplessness of the race which I advocate ; but I do infer, that after a long working of the Socinian system as then sustained, with commanding talents and costly culture, and with a self-sacrificing devotion excelled by no man in New England, he did find it was not sufficiently radical to meet the moral emergency of human society. And in this conclusion we most fully concur.

Methodism further insists on the absolute freedom of man, through a universal bestowment of divine grace, to do what God requires him to do, and for the not doing of which, He will condemn him. In other words, he is free so to accept the provisions of grace as to form thereby his own moral character — the character for which God holds him responsible.

This truth Methodism has persistently affirmed, in opposition to the paralyzing dogma of decreed character and unconditional election and reprobation. From this premise — the absolute moral freedom of

\* Life of J. Blanco White, vol. III.

man — the Methodist ministry has argued with a crushing logic, and startling emphasis, the reasonableness, necessity, and certainty of a future retribution.

It is true the doctrines of repentance and future judgment were previously promulgated ; but, impregnated as they were with the stifling notions of a decreed fatality, they were comparatively inoperative. For however specious the logic which professes to connect moral responsibility with decreed character, the popular mind has always seen an impassable gulf between them. It is only when you assure man that he is absolutely free, that you can properly make him feel his criminality, and fear a retribution.

The Methodist Church has, in common with most other branches of the church, set forth the atonement of Christ as the only ground of the sinner's pardon ; but with this peculiarity. It has said to the sinner, " You are to be pardoned solely through the merit of Christ ; if so, not in any sense through your own merit ; and therefore your demerit, whatever its extent, can be no obstacle to your immediate pardon. Because you are free it is your duty to repent and trust Christ now ; and because you are to be pardoned through the merit of Christ, and not through your own merit, it is your privilege to be pardoned now, since pardon is promised on the condition of faith." In this way we have always aimed at the immediate conversion of men ; as did Peter, on the day of Pentecost.

when three thousand were converted and added to the Church in one day under his preaching.

We have invited sinners to our altars, and directing them to their atoning Savior, bid them look and live, as the Israelites looked to the brazen Serpent and were healed. Thousands on thousands have in this way been renewed in a moment—as in the twinkling of an eye. If any one pronounces this fanaticism, we only refer him to its results in the character and progress of the Methodist Church. If he can believe that a religious life, essentially fanatical, could achieve what the religious life of this body has achieved, he can believe that an enemy on the battle-field could be routed, or a Malakoff carried, by firing blank cartridges.

It is readily conceded that there have been extravagances connected with Methodist revivals, as there have always been with all powerful moral movements; but these have only been the mists drawn up by the bright sun above, from the broad, deep current of Christian progress, which has rolled steadily onward.

The foregoing view of conversion, I am aware, is not now so much a peculiarity of Methodism, as in its earlier history, because other churches are now adopting it, and revival influences, I am glad to say, are now almost as common among them as among us.

Further, Methodism has steadily maintained that, by virtue of the blood of Christ, and the operations of the Holy Spirit, it is the privilege of the believer to

enjoy that maturity in grace which excludes all sin from the heart, and fills it with perfect love to God and man ; thus rejecting, as anti-scriptural, the disheartening idea of the *necessary* continuance of sin in believers. This high experience it considers to be what the Scriptures designate and enjoin as perfection. Not an absolute angelic or Adamic perfection ; not a perfection which does not admit of constant additions of grace, nor which is exempt from human infirmities or temptations ; but just such a state as is described by St. Paul in the first verse of the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans : “ There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ; for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

This doctrine has always been held up in the Methodist Church as the true standard of Christian attainment. This is also of late, I am happy to say, beginning to be taught by other denominations.

Our ministry have also strenuously urged the necessity of continuance in faith and good works, as the only surety against final apostacy and ruin, in opposition to the notion that if a person is once truly a Christian, he has no such freedom that he can ever apostatize so as to be finally lost. We believe Paul’s apprehension for his own safety ignored this view, when he said : “ But I keep under my body and bring it into

subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”  
1 Cor. ix. 27.

It has always been a deep and moving conviction in the ministry and laity of our church, that he only who, by his own free will, endureth unto the end, shall be saved.

Methodism has further maintained, that it is the privilege of all Christians to enjoy a personal knowledge of forgiveness through the direct witness of the Holy Spirit. This witness is defined to be simply an assurance given to the believer of his acceptance with God—“the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father.” For maintaining this, the Methodist ministry have been charged with propagating a licentious and dangerous doctrine. It would indeed be such, if paralleled by the Calvinistic view of perseverance. No one who holds that if a person once becomes a child of God he can never apostatize, so as to be finally lost, can safely teach that one may know beyond a doubt that he is a child of God, for by so doing he will remove from him all motive to “give diligence to make his calling and election sure.”

He should aim to keep the church, as a condition of perseverance, where, in all sincerity, they will sing as they have been taught,

“ ‘Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft’ it bringeth anxious thought ;  
Do I love the Lord, or no ?  
Am I his, or am I not ?”

But with the Arminian view of perseverance, the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit becomes a powerful stimulant to a courageous battling for eternal life. Hence, Methodists have always been taught from their pulpits, never to reckon themselves Christians until, with a full heart, they can sing,

“ My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear ;  
He owns me for his child,  
I can no longer fear :  
With confidence, I now draw nigh,  
And Father, Abba Father, cry.”

This teaching could not do otherwise than lead to a marked positiveness in Christian experience, which has begotten an Apostolic vigor and boldness in drawing the distinction between the Christian and the merely moral character.

It is this which has made the piety of Methodists proverbial for its cheerful tone, and sunny-side view of life and immortality.

These doctrines — a free and full salvation through the atonement of Christ, the necessity of *uncompelled* perseverance to final salvation, a future retribution, and the witness of the spirit to our adoption, brought

out and enforced in the way I have barely indicated, are what have vitalized the Methodist church; they have been to it a very Leyden jar, surcharging it with electric forces, and making it luminous with the elements of an experimental Christianity.

It is no uncommon remark among a class of sincere, practical Christians, "We don't want to hear doctrinal sermons, but rather practical ones," as though the two could not well be combined in the same sermon. But you do not hear that remark from Methodists. The reason is, that the doctrines they are accustomed to hear from their pulpits, are all eminently practical and common sense, and the most unlettered feast on them as the hungry man does on the choicest viands.

2. I next ask your attention to the care which the Methodist church has exercised to secure for herself an experimental and practical ministry as a means of success.

She has done this by placing three qualifications for the sacred office paramount to mere scholarship.

The first is a sound Christian experience.

It is an axiomatic truth with Methodism, that Christianity being a great experimental science, no man can be qualified to preach its doctrines unless he himself has been regenerated by it, so as

to declare its truths as an *experience*, and not merely as opinions. For a confirmation of her orthodoxy on this point you have only to mark the frequency with which Paul, in his speeches and letters, brings forward his own experience, to illustrate and enforce the truths he promulgates.

An original aptitude to the work of the ministry, is a second qualification, regarded by the Methodist church as paramount to literary qualifications.

There are many good farmers, who never could make good mechanics; good book-keepers, who could never be successful merchants. There are many ripe scholars, who can never make good, practical physicians; there are good physicians, who could never become good lawyers, and vice versa. There is something back of an education, requisite to success in any profession. The gospel ministry is by no means an exception to this rule. Unquestionably there are many men in the ministry to-day, placed there mainly on account of their literary qualifications, who ought not to be there. They are neither successful, nor happy in their work. Their abilities do not command for themselves a competent support; and the worst of all is, they do not, and cannot earn it, Sunny Sides and Shady Sides, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Some of them are good ethical lecturers, and would fill well a chair of philosophy; others would make good lawyers; others, good physicians; others, good educators; but good ministers they can never be, because it is not in them to become such.

Education will develop them, but can no more make them successful ministers than it can evolve an entity out of a non-entity.

A third requisite to entering the Methodist ministry, is a divine call to it. The Methodist church has always held, that forasmuch as the Christian ministry is a divine institution for a specific object, God sets apart men for it by the inward movings of the Holy Spirit. And that none, however eminent their literary attainments, should enter it, without an experience akin to that of Paul, when he declared, "Wo is me if I preach not the Gospel."

These three tests which I have just named — a genuine Christian experience, original aptitude to the general work of the ministry, and a divine call to it, must be rigidly applied to every candidate for the Methodist ministry. And in order to this, no one can enter it except on being licensed by a Quarterly Conference, composed of the official members of the society with which the candidate is connected, and who have had ample opportunity to observe his piety, and gifts, as developed in his

daily life, in social religious meetings, and other departments of Christian effort. On being thus licensed and recommended by the same body as a suitable person to enter the Itinerancy, he may be received, if needed, into the Annual Conference on trial, and after two years' labor in that relation, if he prove faithful and successful, and pass satisfactory examinations upon a prescribed course of theological study, he may be received into full connection, and be elected to deacon's orders. Two years subsequent to this, he becomes eligible to elder's orders, provided his services continue to be acceptable, and he has passed satisfactory examinations on an additional course of study.

Literary qualifications for the ministry, the Methodist church has always regarded as of high importance. If any one doubts this, we refer him to the literary and theological institutions now under its patronage, to which I shall soon allude, and which were early established with the express purpose of affording young men, who felt called to the ministry, an opportunity to qualify themselves for entering it.

She has always insisted on the highest mental culture for her ministry that the circumstances would justify. In her early history, she had not men trained in the schools at her command. And rigidly applying the three before-named tests, she took men

from the plough and the workshop, and wherever else they were to be found, and sent them forth to preach an experimental gospel. Moved by the Holy Ghost to their work, and with the doctrines of the gospel burning on their hearts, as an inward experience and life discipline, they poured them forth, not as nicely-shaped opinions, but as the living fire of their inner life. A strange power attended their preaching, and thousands were brought annually by it to the foot of the cross. Few of them indeed were scholars, but many of them were, in a just sense, educated men—men whose minds were trained to consecutive thought, and were ever able to command their resources, and meet successfully any emergency incident to their work. They were masters in polemic theology; else what shall be said of the learned divines who, throughout the land, unsuccessfully antagonized their preaching? They must have been men of giant strength, or, as has been said of them, they could no more have wielded as they did the weapons they drew from the gospel magazine, than maimed Vulcan could have hurled the thunderbolts he forged.

Whether, in her emergency, the Methodist church acted wisely in employing such men in her ministry, let the results decide.

3. I am to state in the next place her appliances for promoting an active and growing piety

in her membership, as a third peculiar means of her success.

The first is great caution in receiving members into full fellowship. No one can be thus received until he has stood on probation at least six months, and has been recommended for full membership by a leader whom he has weekly met in class, and whose duty it is to inquire on these occasions into his spiritual state, and to give him such counsel as he may deem most needed. At the expiration of his probation, if his outward walk has been consistent with a profession of faith, and his leader is satisfied that he possesses a sound Christian experience, the pastor may extend to him the right hand of Christian fellowship.

I will here further add, that such a Christian experience is the only essential qualification for lay membership in the Methodist church. She is not afraid to risk the orthodoxy of any person in her laity who gives what to her is satisfactory evidence that he is thoroughly a regenerated man — that he loves God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself.

She has a doctrinal basis on which all her candidates for the ministry are rigidly examined; but it has never been her usage to require candidates for church membership, embracing as they always must, or should, every grade of intellect and intelligence,

to subscribe to any creed drawn out in the form of theological propositions. And yet there is no church where greater harmony in religious sentiment prevails than in the Methodist church. There has never been a schism in it on doctrines.

Nor is this harmony the result of vagueness. You will find no body of Christians able to give a more intelligent exposition of their religious faith. The truth of this assertion you can test at any time by instituting the requisite inquiries.

In the next place, Methodism has ever steadily aimed to develop in the highest degree practicable the gifts of her laity. Her Class Meetings, Love Feasts, and Prayer Meetings are conducted with this object particularly in view. All, on these occasions, of both sexes, and of whatever abilities, are encouraged to participate in the exercises, by "a word of exhortation," the relation of Christian experience, vocal prayer, and singing. Their zeal is hereby mutually stimulated, and the social element, with the spiritual, is called out and consecrated.

This topic I will dismiss by quoting a few paragraphs endorsed by Dr. Wayland as from a distinguished layman of his own communion. I offer them not as of special interest to Methodists themselves, but as appropriate testimony for others, to the practical wisdom of Methodism in the development and use of her talent.

“ In thousands of instances the whole of a Christian profession amounts simply to this: An individual is found *willing* to join the church, and is introduced by the pastor, perhaps with the consent of the deacons. A very few stereotyped leading questions are asked by the pastor, with a whispered yes or no in reply to them, a listless non-negative vote, the baptism, the right-hand of fellowship, a seat at the Lord’s Table, the name recorded on the church-book — and they are in the church, too often on the shelf. The work seems now completed, while, in fact, it is only the enlistment; the labor and the fighting have hardly begun yet. They have no positive specific duties assigned to them; no one to mark their progress or take note of their delinquencies if they fail; no regular plan of operations to employ the tongue, the hand, and the heart of every member. The Bible is plain enough, ‘They that feared the Lord *spake often one to another*,’ ‘exhorting one another,’ ‘speaking to yourselves’ — but we fail in the practice of these duties. Ministers fail in fostering these duties, and then often complain that their preaching is powerless, without seeing and feeling that the iron must be *heated* before you can work it — that a religious atmosphere, by prayerful active duty among all the membership, must be kept up, or nothing can be effectually done. Our Methodist brethren have their weekly class-meetings, for conference and contributions both, and these, I feel assured, are the sources and

ground-work of the immense increase of that denomination, now largely ahead of us, though we had a century or more the start of them. Their class-meetings 'keep them all at it, and always at it.' Here every absentee is noted and inquired for, and not one present can be a mute-tongued Christian. All participate, and every warm-hearted, real Christian, enjoys it; and here all the talent for usefulness possessed by every member must be brought out and duly appreciated."

"These," says Dr. W., "are the words of a lay brother, whose opportunities for observation have been as large, whose labors have been as abundant, and whose sacrifices for the cause of Christ have been as great, as those of any Christian of my acquaintance, at whose feet I would willingly sit for counsel. I hope they will be duly pondered by all my readers. *If ever we mean to do our duty in the conversion of the world, we must be 'all at it, and always at it.'* Every brother must do his part of the labor. And then the House of the Lord will be builded."

It is scarcely necessary to say that this picture of Methodism, held up for emulation to his own communion by our zealous Baptist brother, finds not its perfect original in every Methodist church. No church, whose members are gathered from this world in its present state, and whose standard is truly Christian, will find it practicable to bring them all fully up to it.

4. I ask your attention, in the last place, to the *Itinerancy*, as the fourth peculiar instrumentality of Methodism.

This is based upon what is believed to be the grand design of ecclesiastical economy, which is evangelic aggression. The design of its Great Head, it is believed, in establishing a visible church, was not to found little ecclesiastical republics, but to organize an army for the conquest of the world. He declares of himself that he came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; a figurative expression strongly marking the militant spirit of his mission — a spirit which pervades and electrifies the whole New Testament dispensation — and which demands for its legitimate development, as we think, a militant organization. Such is the Methodist Itinerancy. It consists in a body of men, who voluntarily enroll themselves, to be sent out from year to year, by an authority which they themselves have vested in a person of their choice, to those fields of moral warfare where the one having the general oversight of the campaign deems their services most needed, and most likely to be successful.

In other words, it consists of conferences of ministers, who receive their appointments annually from one of several General Superintendents whom they have appointed to take the general oversight of their work, and preside over their annual sessions. On these occa-

sions he is met by the Presiding Elders of the Conference, who have visited quarterly all the charges upon their respective districts for the purpose of acquainting themselves with the condition and wants of the several societies, and the qualifications and circumstances of the ministers, and attending to other official and religious duties.

Upon their representations, and what personal knowledge he himself may have, the General Superintendent, with the counsel of the Presiding Elders, makes out the appointments of the preachers for the ensuing year, each preacher and society having been consulted as far as circumstances would allow.

“ The individuals of an aggressive evangelical body,” says Isaac Taylor, “ must all be subject to stern law ; they must be accustomed to act and to move by rule and order ; and they must go forth single, full of an effective energy — more than their own — that is to say, the energy of the collective force which sends them out.” This is the philosophy of itinerant efficiency.

The cry of tyranny has been raised against this system. But have you marked the fact, that this cry does not come from those working under this economy ? It is simply a night-mare figuring in the night-visions of hypochondriacs outside the pale of Episcopal Methodism.

We have, indeed, vested power in the hands of those

whom we have placed at the head of our forces—power which, if held unconditionally, and extending to life, liberty, or property, would be dangerous. What would an army be without commanding officers?

But what possible danger can there be in the power of the commander, so long as it may be taken from him immediately when unjustly used, or if he be guilty of any other “improper conduct;” and so long as enrollment in the militant ranks is strictly voluntary.

If the Presiding Bishop shall see fit, at our next Conference, to station me at some Botany Bay, and my militant zeal does not covet such a field, I can, if I please, file out of the ranks, and that will be the end of the matter. Or, if I choose to remain and disobey his orders, I am amenable not to him, but to my Conference, composed of my brethren, to the number of one hundred and twenty-five.\*

\* It ought, perhaps, to be stated, that the appointments annually made at our Conferences, usually give almost universal satisfaction. There is not, probably, an equal number of ministers in any other denomination, who change their fields of labor with less friction than is experienced by Methodist itinerants in annually or biennially changing theirs. Our Bishops, by their judgment, candor, and piety, justly share the highest confidence and esteem of both the ministry and laity.

Not a stain has ever been found on their ermine in the whole history of Methodism; unless an exception be made in the case of Bishop Andrew, who unfortunately became connected with the system of slavery by marriage, and on account of which he was suspended from the functions of his office. This, with other matters relating to slavery, led to the secession of the southern portion of the church.

It is true, occasionally one falls out of the itinerant ranks, finding the hardships of the campaign greater than he is willing to endure. Like the amateur officer in the Crimea, who went there with a poetic idea of battles from reading knight-errantry, and who, in the first affray, was found skulked under a parapet, and on being rallied by a fellow officer, replied, "He had no taste for fighting;" and by the next steamer was on the way back to his mother.

That the duties of the itinerancy call for heroism, is conceded. But so long as no class of persons can be found more contented in their work than Methodist itinerants, the subject of tyranny in the system under which they labor may as well lie on the table, awaiting further disclosures.

The limits of this discourse will not allow me to dwell here on the merits of this system. Objections can be raised against it, as against every human system.

Let it be tested by the experiment it has made; and this is the severest test to which a practical economy can be subjected. Ericson's theory of motive power won admiration as a theory, but failed in experiment. You need not be told that the Methodist Church could never have had a being but for the Itinerancy.

The Methodist Church on both continents, dating its origin but little over a century ago, with its more than two million communicants, gathered not from

other churches, but from the world, and with its ten millions of the human family regularly attending its pulpit ministrations, is the result to which we refer you as evidence of the practical good sense, the sound philosophy, of the Methodist Itinerancy.

There is a thought, probably, in some of your minds, to which I ought, perhaps, just to refer, in concluding this topic. It is this ; both conquest and growth are laws of Christian progress. Is the Itinerancy as well adapted to the latter as to the former ? Or, in other words more general, are the spirit and economy of Methodism as well adapted to the training and growth of churches already established in well organized communities, as to planting churches in destitute portions of the land ?

I will reply to this also, by simply alluding to what the Methodist Church has done, and is doing, in this regard, leaving you to draw your own inferences.

Mr. Wesley was the first to project the plan of gratuitous Sunday School instruction, five years subsequent to Robert Raikes' experiment, and ten years before the London Sunday School Society ceased paying its teachers, and which expended, in the first sixteen years of its existence, not less than \$20,000 in the salaries of teachers.

The first Sunday School established in the United States was established by Bishop Asbury, in the year 1786. From the year 1790, downward, the Sunday

School has been officially recognized and sanctioned by the Methodist Church.

When they numbered scarcely sixteen thousand members, the Methodists of America gave \$40,000 to the erection of a college. At present we have in the northern branch of the Methodist Church, nineteen colleges, valued at \$1,655,900, with one hundred and five professors, and two thousand nine hundred and sixty-two students; two Theological Institutions, valued at \$343,000; and sixty-five Seminaries, valued at \$1,190,000, with three hundred and six teachers, and fourteen thousand five hundred and seventy-two students.

We have a Sunday School Union, to which not less than \$100,000 is annually contributed, and which embraces ten thousand six hundred schools, containing six hundred and four thousand one hundred and thirteen scholars, with one hundred and ninety-five thousand three hundred and eight volumes in its libraries, and a Sunday School paper with one hundred and five thousand five hundred and twenty-six subscribers.

We have, furthermore, two large publishing establishments, which, in the last four years, have published seven million two hundred and twenty-six thousand four hundred and nine copies of bound books, and eight million three hundred and sixty-two thousand five hundred and seventeen tracts and pamphlets.

We have also a Tract Society, which, at the last

General Conference, had two hundred and eight colporteurs and agents, distributing for the year nearly one hundred and thirty-six thousand volumes, and twelve million pages of tracts, visiting one hundred and eighty thousand families, and with a catalogue of about eight hundred publications in English, German, French, and Scandinavian, and an aggregate of more than \$40,000 contributed for the year.

Our church also supports nine religious weeklies, a theological Quarterly Review, and two literary and religious monthlies. The whole number of subscribers to our different periodicals is two hundred and eighty-five thousand four hundred and sixty.

The valuation of our church edifices, according to the last United States census, is \$14,636,671. Greater than that of any other denomination in the country by \$266,782.

A word of comment upon these statistics, I am sure, cannot be needed by this intelligent audience, to convince them that the elements of internal development and consolidated growth, are as operative in the Methodist church, as in any other religious body.

But this is not a full statement of the truth. Statistics show that Methodism here in New England has, at the present time, a more vigorous growth than any of her sister denominations; the ratio of her increase for the last decade being greater than that of

any other. According to published statistics\* the ratio of increase in Congregationalists for the last fourteen years, ending with the year 1855, was 6.02 per cent.; that of the Baptists, 7.52 per cent.; that of the Methodists, 8.37 per cent.

It is not until within a comparatively recent period that our church has been able to occupy foreign missionary fields; her hands having been full of missionary work at home; though she now has missions established in Scandinavia, Germany, China, India, Bulgaria, Africa, South America, and among the aborigines of this country.†

While Methodism has done more in foreign missions than any of her sister denominations had done at her age, yet it will be many years before she will occupy a position so grand in this work as the American Board and the Baptist Union. All honor to them for the noble stand they have taken in pagan lands. And if they advance so rapidly that we are never able to overtake them, we will rejoice in it, and expect one day to raise a shout with them on the battlements of heaven over a world redeemed.

\* "Convert's Counsellor."

† In England, where the home field is less extensive, the Methodists have taken the lead in foreign missionary work. The Wesleyan Missionary Society has more missionaries and assistants, scholars, communicants and hearers, in the foreign field, and a greater annual income than any other missionary organization in the world.—See Butler's Chart.

If now I should be asked to state in a word why I remain a Methodist, I should say, that while I love and honor my brethren of other names for their zeal and success in the common cause of Christianity, I believe the Methodist church, in its doctrines and economy, is, better than any other, adapted to the work of regenerating the world. And yet I believe it is a blessing to Methodism to have other religious bodies side by side with her, working for the same ultimate end. A generous denominationalism is demanded as a healthful stimulant and corrective. Various ecclesiastical organizations are needed in the vast work of evangelizing the world, as stagings are required on every side of the edifice during its erection. But as when the edifice is completed, the staging is thrown down as worthless, so when the great temple of Christianity is completed, and "the head stone thereof has been brought forth with shoutings of grace! grace! unto it," the denominational scaffolding will be thrown down and forgotten, in admiration of the sublime structure which is to stand forever to the praise of Him who laid its foundation by the sacrifice of himself.

## SECOND LECTURE.

BY

REV. THOMAS B. THAYER,

PASTOR OF THE FIFTH UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,  
WARREN STREET.



## II.

### “WHY ARE YOU A UNIVERSALIST?”

---

“I THINK MYSELF HAPPY BECAUSE I SHALL ANSWER FOR MYSELF.”—

Acts xxvi. 2.

THIS question is supposed to be addressed to the speaker by the audience, and his business is to answer it, giving to those who ask it a reason for the hope that is in him.

In order, however, to a fair understanding of the subject, it is fitting that I should give a just definition of the term “Universalism.” It is not simply the one idea that all men will be saved. It is not a unit, but a system of theology, embracing many particulars. Let me with the utmost brevity state some of these.

1st. Universalism asserts the unity of God, that he is One, Infinite in all his perfections, and consequently rejects the doctrine of the Trinity.

2nd. Christ is the Son of God, gifted above all others — above angel and archangel — with the spirit and power of God, as the Representative of his Love, and the Savior of the world.

3d. It rejects the doctrine of vicarious atonement, and asserts the fundamental truth, that every transgressor must suffer the punishment of his own sin. It teaches the forgiveness, or removal, of sin, but not of punishment. He that walketh on coals of fire, *must* be burned.

4th. It denies the doctrine of total depravity and original sin, as equally a libel on God and man, and asserts the natural goodness of the human heart.

5th. It teaches the rewards of righteousness, and the punishments of sin; and beyond these, that the blessedness of the immortal life is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

6th. It teaches that Salvation is not deliverance from the torments of an endless hell, but from the bondage of sin; that it is inward and spiritual, and not from any outward evil.

7th. It teaches the necessity of repentance and regeneration, as the equivalent of salvation; that there can be no salvation without these, since without these there can be no abandonment of sin.

8th. It teaches that all punishment, whether here or hereafter, is corrective, and must therefore come to an end; and that finally, through the agencies of his infinite wisdom and love, God will reconcile and restore all souls to himself, and good shall be triumphant forevermore.

These are the leading doctrines of Universalism, the essential positions of what it regards as Christian theology.

Of course it is not possible in a single lecture to illustrate and defend all these points, nor do I suppose it is expected I should do so. The object of this course is the discussion of that particular doctrine which gives to each speaker his denominational name and position, and distinguishes him more especially from the rest. In the present case that doctrine is undoubtedly that of the final redemption of the whole human family, and the establishment of perfect harmony in the moral and spiritual universe. To this, therefore, I shall devote my labor, and ask your attention.

I shall draw my answers to the question, "Why are you a Universalist?" from the Works of God, from the Nature of Man, from the Divine Character, and from the Sacred Scriptures.

#### I. FROM THE WORKS OF GOD.

1. Everything in Nature reveals the benevolence and love of God toward man. Everything is arranged for his convenience, and comfort, and happiness. The paternal goodness shows itself in every greatest and least thing — the day and the night, the seed time and the harvest, summer and winter, the succession of fruits

on the earth, the foliage of the forests, the flowers, the birds of the air, the cattle on a thousand hills, the rivers and the sea — all declare the love of him who has built up this beautiful earth as the home of man for the few years he is here.

Now, I cannot believe that he who has wrought so abundantly and kindly for the brief life of the body, has been less careful or bountiful in his provision for the life of the soul, which is eternal. Nature forbids the thought. Each ray of sunshine, each falling rain drop, the lily in the field, the humblest flower, is a witness of the infinite and ever active love of God to man on earth. But what is our life on earth, compared with the endless life of the soul? It is only the shadow compared with the substance ; and surely the goodness which has so lavishly poured out its blessings on the first, will not fail in its mercies to the last.

Every day I read this lesson out of the works of God. Every time the sun shines on me, every breath of the pure atmosphere, every beauty of the landscape, every splendor of the heavens, strengthens my faith in the sublime utterance of the apostle, that “neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor things present nor things to come, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Rom. viii.

2. I am a Universalist, because I believe God is omnipotent in the spiritual world, as well as in the

natural world ; and that he has adapted means to ends as efficiently and successfully in the first as in the last. Nothing in the physical universe fails of its end. The atmosphere, the sunshine, the rain, electricity, fire, the ocean, the tree, the grain of wheat, every element of nature, answers the purpose for which it was created. Why should the truth and grace of God alone fail in their appointed work ? Why should the Gospel, why should Infinite Love, be the only forces of God which are eternally defeated of their ends ?

Let us look at this. If I should stand here to-night and affirm that on a certain time one of the planets had broken from the hold of the sun, and wandered from its orbit, and that God had exerted his power in vain to restore it, and was obliged, after exhausting all the resources of his strength, to abandon the task, and leave it to drive into remediless confusion and wreck, would you not say this was virtual atheism and blasphemy ?

But is it any less atheism or blasphemy to say that the moral or spiritual world has drifted out from its orbit, and that God is exerting all his power through Christ to restore it, and will not succeed ; but finally, utterly defeated, will be compelled to abandon the attempt, and let it drive down into the abysses of endless confusion and sin ? I confess I cannot see the slightest difference in these two positions.

But such a disastrous result cannot come in the

physical or spiritual world, so long as God rules in both. As sure as the coming of the rain in its season, as sure as the budding of the earth in spring, so surely will God, by the power of his love and truth, renew and restore the moral world. This is the lesson which all creation reads to us day by day ; and God himself has authorized the argument. Hear his own words : “ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth — it shall not return unto me void, but it *shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*” — Isaiah xx. 10, 11.

Can anything be more direct and positive than this ? Was it ever known that the rain came down from heaven and went back again, without watering the earth ? Was it ever known that God failed to restore the earth in spring time, and make it bud and bring forth ? Never. Well, God declares that just as certainly as the rain does not return to the heavens without doing the work for which it was sent, so certainly his word shall not return to him void. As surely as the living forces of nature in spring renew and freshen the earth into beauty and abundance, so surely shall his truth, the gospel of his grace, renovate and restore the moral world to its primeval beauty and purity.

Now, as God has given his witness on this point in such plain and unqualified terms, I have no more to say than this—that I believe him, and therefore am a Universalist.

This is all that time and room will allow me to offer on this part of the argument; and it is intended only as an illustration of the method of argument from the works of God.

## II. FROM THE NATURE OF MAN.

1. I argue from the nature of man for the final abolition of evil, and the triumph of good on this ground: Who of us, if he had the power to bring all souls into harmony with truth and goodness, would not do it? We might permit the existence of evil, of pain, and suffering, for a time, for the purpose of discipline, or for many wise and merciful results; but who would ordain evil as an end? Who would rest in it as a final result? Who would permit it as an eternal thing, when he could prevent it in perfect accordance with the established laws of human nature, and to the infinite good of all interested?

God can do this, and while I feel sure that you or I *would* do it, if we could, I dare not say, I cannot believe, that God, who can do it, will not do it. I cannot take the impious ground that I am better than God, more kindly disposed towards my brothers, than

he is towards his children! I dare not say that my heart is more merciful and benevolent than God's, or that I shudder and shrink from doing what he will do!

And it is no reply to this to say that God permits evil and suffering in this world. Temporary evil, evil as a means, admits of explanation; but evil as a final result, endless evil, admits of no explanation. To say that, if present evil is consistent with the goodness of God, then endless evil may be consistent with it, is proving too much. I might reply with equal force of analogy, that if God, consistently with his goodness, permits the righteous to suffer here, for a season, then he may by the same rule permit them to suffer hereafter endlessly.

But to return. I know that my whole soul revolts from the bare thought of endless torment — of a soul kept in being through all eternity for the sole and only purpose of suffering — denied the privilege of dying under the torture — sustained and forced into life by exertion of Almighty Power, that it may agonize and writhe in torments which would crush an Archangel, if it were not for this direct action of God in supporting life!

This is frightful beyond expression, and only a fiend could devise such cruelty — nay, even Satan himself would weary of it at last — and every man who has in him a heart of flesh, says, “*I* would not do it! My whole being cries out against it, and if God is infinitely good, *He* will not do it!”

2. I believe in universal redemption as the only permanent and secure foundation on which heaven itself can rest. If the common doctrine on this subject be true, every individual in this assembly will lose some dear friend, parent, husband, wife, or child, or brother, or sister.

Now, it is not possible for us here to witness the suffering of such as these, without keenest sympathy with them. Our nerves quiver and tremble with every groan, with every convulsion of the anguished frame, with every cry of agony which breaks from them. What peace or rest, what joy is there for you, when your wife, or child, or mother, is torn with racking pain, or crushed with most horrible bodily torture? Can you sit beside them and sing, and make merry? Can you go about your duties and pleasures, utterly indifferent, while they writhe in agony, and cry aloud to you for help?

Look at this a little. If your child fall into the fire, or your sister or brother fall into the water, and you hear their screams for help, can you look on and see them struggling in the anguish of a dreadful death, and make no effort to relieve them? feel no pain, no throb of sympathy?

But this agony is only for a few minutes, at most; while the torments of hell are a million fold greater, and endless as the life of God! If you cannot be happy in view of those, how can you bear these last?

Are you to be more or less loving in heaven? Do you expect to be changed there? But how — into fiends or angels — into better or worse? Surely heaven is not to rob us of all the noblest attributes of our nature, and crush out all the generous sympathies which make our life here so beautiful and Christ-like.

And in this connection I have often thought of David and Absalom. You know how the wicked young man sinned against his indulgent and affectionate old father; and yet how that father clung to him through all his waywardness and sin, even to the last, his love never wearying, never faltering for a moment.

How touching his charge to his captains, as they went forth to battle: “Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.” And when they told him that the young man was killed, how overwhelming the flood of anguish which burst upon the father’s heart: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Now, when David stands in heaven — even if he is no more loving and forgiving than he was here — and looking round finds Absalom is not there, but writhing in the torments of the pit, transfixed with all the fiery darts of Satan, will not that cry of agony break from him again: “O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee! O my son, my son Absalom!”

And if it be so — if his heart there be as warm, and

tender, and generous as it was here, what will heaven be worth to him without Absalom? And if it be not so—if now he can fling his son off from his heart, and give him over to endless tortures, without one emotion of pity or sympathy—which shall we honor and love most, the David of earth, or the David of heaven?

These are questions which press upon every mind and heart with tremendous weight, and reveal to the thoughtful and loving Christian how utterly impossible is the bliss of heaven side by side with the torments of hell. There is no heaven possible for us without the presence of those we love. And every body loves some one, and every body is loved by some one. It is not in the nature of things, that these loving ones can go part to a heaven of joy, and part to a world of woe. Heaven itself would demand, as the condition of its own blessedness, that hell shall be abolished; that there shall come an end to suffering, and that all shall have part in the joy of the restoration.

### III. FROM THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

I am a Universalist, because the character and attributes of God cannot be made to harmonize with any other view of the results of the divine government.

To say nothing of his goodness, we must surely believe that if God really wishes, and has purposed to

save all men, his infinite wisdom is able to devise some successful plan for its accomplishment. Say whatsoever can be said, of the free agency of man, of the obstinacy and depravity of the human heart, of the rejection of the conditions of salvation — there is, after all, a simple reply to all this. God either did, or did not, foresee all these difficulties when he devised the Plan of redemption ; if he did not foresee them, then his knowledge is not infinite — but all agree that it is. He did, then, foresee these difficulties, and of course, foreseeing, he provided against them, and the plan adopted was adopted with express reference to overcoming them. There is, therefore, no way of justifying the *Wisdom* of God, but in the removal of all evil, and the final restoration of all souls.

But again : the knowledge of God embraced the fate of every soul he was about to create. Let us consider this. Far back in the solitudes of eternity God was alone. Man was not. It was optional with God whether he would create such a being as man, or not. His infinite knowledge took in all the possibilities of his existence ; his fall, his depravity, his temptations and sins, the abuse of his free agency, and every minutest thing which could influence his condition, and work up into the web of his destiny.

Now, would Infinite *Goodness* create you or me with the certain knowledge that the existence he was about to bestow would prove an endless curse to us ?

Is it possible to believe so monstrous a thing of our dear Father in Heaven ? Can we conceive of a more awful absurdity than this yoking together Infinite and Everlasting Love with infinite and everlasting Woe ?

“God is Love.”—1 John iv.

No; the all-embracing knowledge of God associated with the act of giving existence, is a solemn pledge on his part, that the existence given shall prove a final blessing to its possessor.

But the divine *Justice* requires the same thing. It is perfectly idle and absurd to argue for endless torment as the *just* punishment of sin. The very instincts of our nature, as well as reason, repudiate such a monstrous abuse of the name of justice. The idea that the wrongs of this momentary life are to be visited with unutterable tortures, perpetuated through all eternity, is too horrible for thought; and no ingenuity of argument, no possible plea of necessity, can make us feel that it is right or fitting.

Beside, this awful vengeance is inflicted by a God who has suffered nothing by the sin. ? He is lifted above all possibility of injury by anything man can do. Our sin cannot reach him, or in any way disturb the foundation of his throne; and yet how dreadful the vengeance he wreaks on his helpless children !

If it be said that justice to those who suffer from sin and crime demands the punishment, I have only to say, that no human being, however much he may have

suffered, desires such a fiendish revenge as *endless* torture. You do not ask it, I do not; no mortal, not even the most depraved, desires it. And if they who have suffered do not ask it—if the injured wife of a drunken husband, if the victim of oppression, if the slave, if even the victim of the murderer—does not demand such horrible punishment, why should God, who suffers nothing, demand it, and call it justice ?

No ; the justice of God forbids it ; and all the Scriptures say, he will reward men *according* to their works. But an eternity of woe is not according to a moment of sin, though its consequences are life-long, and an injury to every mortal on earth. There is no proportion between time and eternity ; no proportion between a finite sin and an infinite punishment. The *justice* of God, therefore, demands an end to punishment, and the final redemption of all. And it is this very attribute of God — his eternal, unerring justice — which constitutes one of the chief corner stones of our faith, and makes us forever confident that all pain shall finally cease, and all evil end in good.

But there is another argument drawn from the character of God. It is certainly safe to say that an infinitely good being will do something differently from what an infinitely evil being would do. But what could an infinitely evil being do more than to inflict endless torment on those he hated ? If you were about, for example, to describe the character of Satan, his

cruelty and revenge, what could you say of him worse than that he would cast his victims into a fiery furnace of torture, and decree that they should live eternally, only that he might torment them eternally? What more, I ask, could Satan himself do than this?

And can any Christian believe that the same description of character and conduct applies equally to God and the Evil One? Can any one believe that the worst thing you can say of Satan, is the very thing itself which God will do? I dare not say this! I dare not believe it! My creed teaches me that an infinitely good being will do the very opposite of what the devil would do. And so I reject the doctrine of endless woe, and believe in universal grace and salvation, because the character of God, as an infinitely good being, demands it.

#### IV. ARGUMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

I believe in universal redemption, because the Scriptures teach it in every variety of method and language, by inference and direct statement, positively and negatively, morally and doctrinally.

1. I cite two passages to show the character of the *inferential argument* in one direction only. In Acts iii. it is written: "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you"—How? The apostle is stating the very object for which God sent Christ, and if he sent him to save from endless woe, he

will say so. Does he? "Sent him to bless you, by turning away every one of you *from his iniquities*." He came to save from iniquity, hence, "thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people *from their sins*." — Matt. i. 21. Note, too, that his people are sinners, and that by saving them he makes them saints — but they are his before they are saved, and he saves them because they are his.

So Paul, in Galatians i.: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father."

Here again the apostle declares the very object for which Christ gave himself; and surely, if ever there was a time to announce the doctrine of future endless woe, this was it. Yet not a word about it from first to last. But the argument is not negative merely, but positive; for he not only does *not* say that he came to save us from a future evil world, but he *does* say positively that he came to save us from the evil and sin of this present world.

The logical inference from these and similar passages is this. If Christ did not come to save us from endless punishment, then we were not exposed to it, and if we were not exposed to it, then certainly the doctrine is not true. And if it be not true, then its opposite — the final holiness and blessedness of all men — *is* true.



2. THE MORAL ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE.—I am a Universalist, because there seems to me no other way of explaining, or giving authority, to the moral precepts of the gospel. For example : “ If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” — Rom. xii. 20.

Now, is it possible to believe that God never intends himself to overcome evil with good, and yet commands us to do it ? Can he expect us to act from a higher plane of thought and sentiment than he himself acts from ? Will he bid us to burn away the enmity of our foes by the fire of our own love and kindness, when he plunges those who offend him into the flames of eternal vengeance ? He commands us to feed our enemies when they hunger, but his must agonize with the tortures of endless famine, while there is bread enough and to spare in their Father’s house ! Can any rational person believe this ?

But again. It is written, “ Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, that you may be like your Father in heaven ; for he causeth his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? Do not even the publicans the same ? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” — Matt. v. 44-48.

How overwhelming is the argument here. If God commands us to love our enemies, will not he do it? Does he command us to be more generous and forgiving than he is? Will he bid us poor, frail, tempted creatures to return blessing for cursing, and good for evil, when he, who is exalted above all weakness, and passion, and provocation, has not the moral strength nor courage to do it himself? Who dares say this? They who do say it — who affirm that he will love only those who love him — bring him down to the level of the publicans — for “do not even the publicans the same?”

Beside, if God returns evil for evil, and cursing for cursing, then what are we to do, when we are exhorted to “be perfect as God is perfect, to be followers of God as dear children?” — Eph. v. If we follow God we must do as he does — return cursing for cursing, and overcome evil with evil. On the other hand, if in returning good for evil, and love for hatred, we follow God, then he will do the same; and by the fire of love will purge out all our evil, and renew us in his own heavenly image.

3. The next argument from the Bible is the CORRECTIVE NATURE OF THE DIVINE PUNISHMENTS, and directly confirmatory of the moral argument, that God will overcome evil with good.

There is no doctrine more clearly taught in the Scriptures than the punishment of sin. Every trans-

gression will certainly receive a just recompense of reward. God is “long suffering, patient, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty.” And it would be neither just nor merciful to do it, since punishment is one of the means by which the sinner is brought to consider the evil of his ways, and finally to repentance and reformation.

The Psalmist says, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word — thou art good, and doest good. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.” — cxix. 67, 71, 75.

“The Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” — Lam. iii.

Hence it is written, “*Happy* is the man whom God correcteth, therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty — for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” — Job. v.

These passages reveal the purposes of God in his punishments and chastisements, viz: to correct and make spiritually whole again. Of course therefore they must come to an end. But this is beautifully illustrated and confirmed by the apostle in Hebrews xii. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the

Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Furthermore, we have had fathers of the flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ; but he *for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, *afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness* to them that are exercised thereby.

It would not be easy to frame language into phrases more positively declarative of the corrective nature of divine punishments than these. And then, to make it plain beyond doubt, we are assured that there is an “*afterward*” to these chastisements, and this is the “peaceable fruit of righteousness.”

It only remains to say that we believe the testimony, and therefore believe with the Psalmist, that “the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. *He will not always chide ; neither will he keep his anger forever.*”— Ps. ciii. 8, 9. And we rejoice in the words of the Father himself, who says, “*I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth ;* for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.”— Isa. lvii. 15--21.

4. DIRECT TESTIMONY FROM THE SCRIPTURES.— Time and room demand the briefest form of state-

ment, with the least elaboration of argument. I shall, therefore, throw the texts into classes as much as possible.

1. *The purpose of God.* “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, *according to his good pleasure*, which he hath *purposed in himself*, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.” — Eph. i.

Here is a distinct declaration of the purpose of God to gather to himself all things in Christ. “All things,” says Archbishop Newcome, “means all persons, all intelligent beings.” What is intended by this ingathering, cannot be mistaken, and if it could, the apostle shuts off all error by repeating the thought in Col. i.: “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” God, then, declares that it is his purpose and his pleasure to reconcile all men to himself through Christ.

Observe, *we* are to be reconciled to God — not God to *us*. The Scriptures always state it so.—Eph. ii.; 2 Cor. v.; Rom. v.; xi.

The question now is, Will the purpose of God fail, and his pleasure be defeated? The Bible will answer;

and I quote the passages, be it observed, merely for the general principle involved, viz: that whatever God really purposes, he can and will do.

“ The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” — Isaiah xiv. 24. Again; “ The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it; his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ? ” — verse 27. “ I have purposed, I will also do it.” — Isaiah xlvi. 11. And so of his pleasure: “ My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” — verse 10.

Whatever God therefore purposes he will do; and hence Paul speaks of “ the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.” — Eph. i.

We see no possible way of avoiding this conclusion. No argument can be more direct and decisive. The two propositions given lead inevitably to the third. Let us put it in the form of a syllogism.

Whatever God has purposed to do, he will do:

God has purposed to gather together in Christ all things;

*Therefore*, he *will* gather together all things in Christ.

The same may be said of his pleasure. He declares he will do all his pleasure, and the Holy Spirit certifies that it is his pleasure to reconcile all men to himself;

and therefore, if these two positions are true, the third follows, beyond all possibility of refutation, viz: he *will* reconcile all men to himself through Jesus Christ.

No other result can be reached, except by denying a part of the premises; either that God will not do all his pleasure, or that it is not his pleasure to reconcile all men in Christ — and in either case it is a denial of the record. And John says, “He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” — 1 John v.

2. Let us refer to the *Mission of Christ*. The apostle exhorts that we should pray for all; “for,” he says, “this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men — the man Christ Jesus; — who gave himself a ransom *for all* to be testified in due time. — 1 Tim. ii. Again; we are told that Jesus “tasted death *for every man*.” — Heb. ii. And John declares, “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of *the whole world*.” — 1 Epist. ii. And again he says, “We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” — iv.

These plain and positive statements exclude all necessity for argument. It is clear enough what Christ

came into the world to do, and the only question is this, Will he do it? Will he accomplish the work the Father gave him to do? To this point he witnesses by saying, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."—John iv. 34. And at the close of his mission on earth, he gives the assurance that he had laid the foundation securely—that his truth and grace would work effectually, in this testimony: "Father, I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."—John xvii.

To this we may add many more passages, showing the certainty of the world's redemption by Christ. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. And the Spirit testifies by the prophet, that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."—Isaiah liii. For how many did the soul of Christ travail? For "all," for "every man," for "the world," for "the whole world," as we have seen; and in the complete deliverance of these he shall be satisfied. *Shall* be, not may be. There is no doubt nor contingency.

Hence the angels proclaimed the birth of Christ as "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."—Luke ii. And looking to this grand result, is the declaration, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” — Phil. ii.

Such is the purpose and the end of Christ’s mission. No ingenuity of argument can avoid the issue, without impeaching the witnesses. I do not wish to deceive myself, nor to deceive others. I would not, knowingly, utter here one word that, dying, I would wish to withdraw. But it is not possible for me to see these testimonies in any other light; nor do I see how any fair and honest mind can avoid the conclusion to which they so manifestly lead.

3. *The Promises.* God made promise to Abraham, repeating it to Isaac and Jacob, saying: “In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations, and families, and kindreds of the earth be blessed.” — Genesis xii., xxii., xxvi., xxviii.; Acts iii. These terms are as comprehensive as language can be made to be, and their universality is beyond debate.

Who is this seed of Abraham? Paul will answer: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not to seeds as of many, but as of one, to thy seed, which is Christ.” — Gal. iii. All nations, families, and kindreds of earth, therefore, are to be blessed in Christ. In some way every individual human being is to inherit the blessing of the Savior.

But how? What blessing? This is answered by the Holy Spirit in the following: “And the Scripture

foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." — Gal. iii.

I cannot make this any plainer. There is no room for comment or argument. The promise to Abraham is identical with the gospel ; and since this promise embraces all the kindreds of the earth in its blessing, how appropriate the angel's words, that the gospel is "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

And in the light of these promises of the great redemption, how full of meaning these and other kindred passages : " There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." — Dan. vii. " All kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him ; men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." — Ps. lxxvii. 17. " All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord ; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." — Ps. xxii.

4. *The Resurrection.* We do not regard the Resurrection as a physical change merely — the raising of the body — whatever definition is put on the word ; but a moral and spiritual change, which removes all the elements of the earthly, and renews the soul in the likeness of God.

“ The children of this world marry and are given in marriage ; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more ; for they are equal unto the angels, and are children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” — Luke xx. ; Matt. xxii.

Now, who are worthy to obtain that resurrection world ? or, in other words, how many shall be raised from the dead ? Paul answers : “ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Matthew omits the sentence, “ worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead,” showing that he attaches no weight to it as an excluding or restricting clause. But Paul puts that at rest, and shows, what all Christians believe, that all mankind shall be raised from the dead.

Here, then, is the argument : All who are raised from the dead will be children of God, and equal unto the angels — all mankind will be raised from the dead. *Therefore* all mankind will be children of God, and equal unto the angels.

The moral and spiritual nature of the resurrection change is shown by the manner of statement — “ and are children of God, *being* (the participle here has the force of the word “ because,” or the phrase “ for the reason that ”), “ *being*, or because, the children of the resurrection.” They are spiritually the children of

God, because this resurrection, or *anastasis*, uplifts, exalts, or raises the whole being into the divine or heavenly likeness. Hence Paul says, “As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” We *shall*—positive and unqualified.

And this argument is pursued at great length in 1 Cor. xv. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” In the same strain he says, “We shall not all sleep”—i. e. die; there will be some living when the end comes, and the grand consummation takes place—and this shows that the apostle does not mean himself and brethren alone when he says “*we*,” for they all died ages ago—he speaks of mankind generally—“we shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Observe, “*the dead*;” not the saints only, not any particular dead, but all the dead.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies

under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." — This shows what kind of enemies are to be destroyed, as do also Heb. ii. and 1 John iii. " For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"; and " that through death he might destroy death, and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil." These are the enemies to be destroyed, the devil, the works of the devil, death; and as the last of these is death, it implies the destruction of all the others previously. Then, when all the enemies of God and man are destroyed, or, as the apostle has it —

" When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all!"  
verses 21-28. See the whole chapter.

Nothing can add to the strength or directness of this apostolic argument. Words of mine would only weaken it. I therefore close this portion of the testimony with a single additional passage: " For the creature (man) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God." — Rom. viii.

Here is the same universality of thought and language. " The creature," — i. e. says the Orthodox Macknight, " every human creature," " all mankind,"

— “SHALL BE DELIVERED from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God ;” which corresponds perfectly with the declaration of Christ, that they “are children of God, being children of the resurrection.” Well, in view of this, might Paul say, “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”— Rom. xiv.

I turn now from these arguments of subjects, or doctrines based on classes of texts, to a few single passages furnishing direct testimony to the great redemption.

1. *Romans* v. 18-21. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This is one of those marked passages which seem to shut out all doubt as to the extent of that grace

which came by Jesus Christ. The phrases which are set over against each other must be allowed to be equal, and the comparison perfect. If all men are not justified, then all men were not condemned. If the phrase is not universal on one side, then it is not on the other. Whatever its force or extent, it is the same in both cases, and you cannot condemn any more than you justify. The free gift of grace keeps side by side with the judgment of condemnation.

And so in the next verse, where the thought is repeated in other language. The word "many" or "the many," *οἱ πολλοί*, all agree signifies the multitude, or mankind. And the same "many" who are made sinners by the disobedience of one, are made righteous by the obedience of the other. Deny that all will be made righteous, and you deny that all were made sinners. We know that all are sinners, and by the same authority we know that all will be made righteous. And so the witness of the Holy Spirit is the same in apostle and prophet; for, speaking by Isaiah, it says, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. The word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." — xlvi.

But in the next verse the argument advances a step; for we are assured that "where sin abounded, grace

did *much more abound*?" Now, the race is no longer equal; grace has outrun sin, and abounds beyond it. How can this be if sin is endless? If sin abounds through all eternity, how can grace abound much more than this? Can it be more than endless? Or, if sin extends to the whole human race, and grace extends only to a part, how can it be said that it abounds much more? Is not the opposite true in that case, viz: that sin abounds much more than grace? One thing is certain; if this doctrine is true, the passage I have quoted is false; and if the passage quoted is true, the doctrine of endless sin is false.

And the same idea of abounding grace is embodied in the next verse: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life." Mark the addition of "eternal" before "life," so making the antithesis imperfect for the express purpose of showing that grace reaches beyond sin, and the "*eternal life*" beyond death. So full and complete is the apostle's argument; and without comment I leave it to the judgment and candor of the hearer.

2. *Romans xi.* The Jews regarded themselves as the especial favorites of God, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. On the other hand, the early Gentile converts, bringing in many of their old Pagan notions with them, and seeing the judgments coming on the Jews, began to boast that these were excluded and cast

cut from the favor of God, while they, the Gentiles, were received into their place, as the special favorites of heaven. Accordingly, regarding the Jews as the enemies of God, they treated them with contempt, and grew intolerant towards them.—verses 11-24.

Now, Paul takes up the matter at this point, and endeavors to show both parties that they were in error, and that the gospel plan did not recognize the final exclusion of either, but embraced the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. “I say, then, Have they (the Jews) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the *world*, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?”

And then he proceeds to show that this unbelief and blindness of the Gentiles is only for a season, till the purpose of God is complete. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.”

The argument is plain. The blindness of the Jews is in part only—some have already believed—and the unbelief of the remainder is only temporary, to continue till the multitude of the nations is brought in—and then *all* Israel shall be saved, together with the fulness of the Gentiles.

Then he repeats it, that this leaving them in unbelief was not for condemnation, but for the fulfilment of the plan of salvation, which placed all in the same relations to the divine mercy: “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief.” Why? “*That he might have mercy upon all!*”

And with this conclusion, the apostle breaks into the triumphant song: “O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . . For *of Him*, and *through Him*, and *to Him are all things* — to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

3. *Revelations* v. 9–13. Here the Revelator gives us the song of glory to the Lamb.

*First*, The redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” offer up their praise to him who had made them kings and priests unto God.

*Second*, The angels join in the song, “and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

*Third*, and finally, the whole creation takes up the hymn of triumph: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth” — surely this is comprehensive enough? No, the Reve-

lator is determined to make it strong beyond all doubt—"and such as are in the sea." This embraces all, certainly; there is nothing more to add? Yes, not satisfied with this even, he piles words on words, and sentences on sentences; not satisfied with all in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, he repeats again, "*and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!*"

What can any mortal man add to this? What words or phrases can be invented stronger or more thoroughly comprehensive and universal than these dictated by the Holy Spirit? And this is the grand consummation of the Redeemer's mission — *universal holiness and blessedness, to the glory and the praise of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ the Savior!*

And here I close. This is my answer to the question with which I began; and I believe that in substance it will be accepted by those with whom I am denominationaly associated.

Believing this, we, with the apostle, "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and "do enter into rest." By it we are strengthened in the time of temptation, and we are comforted in our sorrows. And we realise in our hearts the words of the apostle, that "God is the Savior of all men, specially of those that

believe." — 1 Tim. iv. Believing in this common salvation of all men, we have the eternal life of faith, and enjoy the *special* salvation of the believer; being delivered from the "fear which hath torment," because the heart is filled with that "perfect love which casteth out all fear." — 1 John iv.

We are not Universalists because we love God, but we love God because we are Universalists — because we believe in his infinite and everlasting goodness. Faith precedes love and produces it. It is the cause of which love is the effect. Or, as the apostle says, "We love him because he first loved us." — 1 John iv. 19.

We accept all things from God in faith, never doubting but that he orders all things wisely and kindly. If we sin, he will punish us, and we know that we need the correction, and we never pray to be forgiven this.

We expect our share of the sorrows and sufferings of life — we accept with submission the discipline, knowing how often it is that in the furnace of affliction the pure gold of the spirit is separated from the earthly dross, and made ready to receive anew, and forever, the image and superscription of God.

And when death comes, we walk down in the valley of shadows, knowing that we shall find there the shining footprints of the Savior, and confident that in due time the morning light of the resurrection will break upon the spirit, and we shall be with God forever!

**NOTE.** — The following statistics will show the reader of these Lectures the nominal strength of the Universalists as a denomination, in this country. One United States Convention, nineteen State Conventions, eighty Ecclesiastical Associations, seven State Missionary Societies, three State Traet, three State Educational, and three State Sunday School, Societies; one State Relief Fund of \$12,000, and one State Book and Paper Establishment; one thousand and ninety-eight Religious Societies, nine hundred and one Houses of Worship, and six hundred and twenty-one Ministers; two Universities, one College, one Theological School, ten High Schools, and eighteen Periodicals.

The Unitarians of England, generally, if not universally, avow their faith in the great redemption. In Germany, Dr. Dwight said many years ago, that “the doctrine of the Eternity of Future Punishment is *almost universally rejected*. I have seen but one person in Germany who believed it, and but one other whose mind was wavering on this subject.”

— *Travels in the North of Germany*, p. 421. Dr. Sprague of Albany, in his late volume, reports the celebrated Dr. Pinkerton as saying, “that a large part of the good people of Germany believed the doctrine of Universal Restoration, though they were rather cautious about openly avowing it.” — *European Celebrities*, p. 103.

I might add many more facts, showing the extent to which the doctrine of the final restoration has made its way into the hearts of the people, and helped to soften or remove the sterner features of other creeds, but want of space forbids.



THIRD LECTURE.

BY

REV. JAMES N. SYKES,

PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH.



### III.

#### WHY I AM A BAPTIST.

---

"BUT WE DESIRE TO HEAR OF THEE WHAT THOU THINKEST : FOR AS CONCERNING THIS SECT, WE KNOW THAT EVERYWHERE IT IS SPOKEN AGAINST." — Acts xxviii. 22.

WE cheerfully accept the very courteous invitation which you have given us to appear before you, and give a reason for our FAITH. A high authority binds this upon every Christian man, to be always ready to give to every man that asketh him, a reason of the HOPE that is in him. Faith and Hope cannot be kept far apart, for in that beautiful triangle of graces, Faith, Hope, Charity, which represents the perfection of the whole Christian character, *faith* takes the precedence in respect to time ; but with this distinctly implied, that faith is to be completed in charity. Hope, standing between the two, is the golden clasp that unites earth and heaven. We *hope*, that in stating an outline of our *faith*, we shall not violate the precept, "let all your things be done with *charity*." Certainly no feeling of admiration stirs in our bosom towards that man, though his intellectual light were brilliant as

a noon-day sun, who cannot, with a tender charity to all, and without acrimony to any, state the points of difference between them and him, and advocate the gospel as he has received it from God, and as he feels bound by his love to God and to man, to maintain the truth in the meekness of that gospel.

The great fault of our polemic theology has hitherto been, that it has been baptized in the Meribah, where contending sects have set themselves in the array of battle, all heedless of that great primary duty, to learn to speak the truth in love — to contend for *truth* and not for *victory*. God is tolerant of error with much long suffering; but erring, ignorant man, is naturally as intolerant to the errors of others, as he is indulgent to his own. Hence it has many times happened, that when buckling on his Christian armor, he has passed unheeded over the great truth that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but has clothed himself in the warrior-spirit, and fought with holy truth as it had been the unholy sword or spear. I state not these things as if they were unknown to you, but only to inform you that I understand the peril of my position, and that, forewarned of its dangers, it is both my purpose and desire to avoid them.

I am encouraged to believe that this error will be avoided when I turn my attention to the task assigned me. The theme directs me to what my own denomination receives and believes to be the truth of God,

and not to what it regards the errors of others ; to set forth the doctrines as “ they are most surely believed among us,” not to assail those that are upheld by others. If any are sensitive with a fear that self-defence necessarily implies a hostile attitude towards those of opposite opinions, it shall be my endeavor so to speak that the hostility shall be contained entirely in the attitude, and not be allowed either to creep into my words, or be harbored in my feelings.

In the words now spoken, I have indicated the brief and significant reply to the question which I am before you to answer, viz : Why, from love to God and man, are you a Baptist ? Because, with the best light which God has given to me, I believe that the doctrines taught in the Bible have essentially an organized form in the Baptist churches. My reason on this general question of personal faith, doubtless is the same with that of him who preceded me, and him who shall succeed me. To be a Baptist, or anything else, except an Atheist, from any other principle than that of a reverent, filial love to God, which contains a deference to his authority as supreme, is a solecism. In this part of our faith we all agree. Faith is not an article of commerce — a commodity that can be exchanged at pleasure. So long as it is genuine, it is invincible, incorruptible, and inexehangeable. Gold cannot buy it, power cannot crush it, position cannot alter it.

The question really signifies, why are you a Baptist

rather than somebody with another name. In other words, what is there in the sentiments that are held under that name to which you feel that allegiance and obedience is due, as to the service and authority of God? Certainly I would not be a Baptist if the evidence were furnished me that another segment of Christ's Church embodied just as purely, the Savior's ideal of the church. On the supposition that each denomination has an equal amount of truth embodied in it, I can think of no satisfactory argument why more than one should exist.

I cannot persuade myself that there is any adequate remuneration attainable for the inconvenience arising from the separation of small communities into little fractions of societies, each tugging and struggling to maintain a precarious existence, and the alienation that has come from this partitionment, except it be found in a personal consciousness of obedience to God.

It will be seen, then, that the question suggests another, which ought first to be answered.

What is it to be a Baptist? Do not regard me as cynical if I complain aloud, and say, that as a denomination we seem to have been singularly unfortunate in not having made ourselves distinctly understood on the most vital of our differences. It has almost never been my privilege to find our sentiments correctly represented by those who oppose us. Seldom have I met

with a statement of our leading principles, by others, which any intelligent Baptist could or would accept as being entitled to be regarded as anything better than a mere parody, and as often bad as a caricature. Things incidental are placed for things fundamental, while principles of primary importance have been blinked altogether out of sight. Hence the extended impression that we, as a denomination, are ruled by the obstinate prejudices of ignorance rather than by clearly drawn and sharply defined convictions of duty created directly by the word of God. Were many an otherwise intelligent man in this community to be asked the very question now before me, it would not surprise me at all to hear him reply that the Baptists are a sect which differs from others around them mainly in these two things ; they insist upon baptism by Immersion, and they do not baptize infants—an answer which about as truly describes the difference between us and others, as if to the question, what is the distinction between a Monarchy and a Republic, the names of Queen Victoria and President Buchanan should be given as the proper answer. Neither of them would be accepted as a true statement. They are utterly unworthy of us, and lead many fair and liberal minded persons to look upon us as a herd of ignorant and superstitious men, imposed upon by the unmeaning sound of a name, governed by the childish whim of a peculiarly self-denying obedience to their Lord, and liberal only in hav-

ing a quantity of water large enough to be soaked in, in consequence of which they feel duly authorized to say to the pious and saintly men of other communions, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou"—a people incapable of recognizing anything Christian or commendable outside of a Baptist Church.

Great faults and many no doubt we have, but not these so charged upon us. Every member of our churches is not always as well educated as we could wish. "True it is—and pity 'tis, 'tis true," that individuals may be found among us of narrow, illiberal minds, who may in their own case have sat for such a portrait. But do all of this class of men belong to our churches? Will any other communion allow itself to be judged by the corresponding class among them? Let me do this and I need not ask for more time than to-morrow to blot the fair fame of any of the leading denominations among us, however worthy of commendation they may be. But this work would be alike unamiable and unprofitable. I put the question to any man among you, and ask if you are willing to adopt such a representation as a proper and true description of the members of Baptist churches within the circle of your acquaintance? Are they below the average intelligence and refinement that pervades the communities wherein they reside. As known by us they are not composed exclusively of any one class. As a general thing they are not of the

richest nor of the poorest classes of society. In our own State are nearly thirty-four thousand, connected with two hundred and fifty-nine churches, and the number of those who agree with these in sentiment cannot be less than one hundred thousand. Their relative number and position in this State is not higher here than it is throughout the United States, in every part of which they are found, in almost every town and village, to the number of not less than nine hundred thousand; while those who worship with them are, by a wavering estimate, placed at from five to seven millions. To them, by the last census of our country, **FULL ONE QUARTER** of all the church accommodations in our land belong. If it sounds a little like a pompous vanity to read such majestic numbers, what would it sound like—if one individual, of no great consequence perhaps, rising up against them all—found as they are among all classes—the low and the high—the poor and the rich—the illiterate and the erudite—should hurl against them the charge to which I have alluded? Can it be supposed that such and so many persons would adhere tenaciously to merely idle and nonsensical whims? There must be something of solid principle to gain, and still more so to retain, with religious fidelity to their principles, such numbers—hundreds and thousands of whom are better qualified to speak in their own defence than the

very humble individual now almost accidentally called upon to speak for them.

In stating what these principles *are*, the triangular appears the most convenient form. It has at least this advantage, that it is significant of perfection. Our entire doctrinal and practical basis comprehends many truths, which we share in common with those churches popularly called evangelical, and in which *we have always agreed with them*. Some, in which now the religious community around has very happily *come into agreement with us*, and which, therefore, cannot any longer be claimed exclusively as our own. Other some, in which *we never have been able to agree* with any other church organizations, and *do still disagree with them*. We shall observe this order throughout this discussion.

There is a broad basis of fundamental truths on which we stand in the same company with at least six of the principal denominations in our country. We have no such self conceit as would set ourselves up for the defence of doctrines in which so many and so able persons have at least an equal interest and responsibility with ourselves; and we aim only at hinting the outline of an exposition of them.

While the changed aspect of the religious world would persuade us that a different form of expression would be preferable, still, without sacrificing any prin-

inciple of our common faith — if the viii., xxiii., xxvii., and xxxvi. of the Thirty-nine Articles were changed, we could accept all of the others. So if the Augsburg Confession were amended in about the same proportion, we should not dissent from it. With still fewer variations, and less important, we could accept the Cambridge Platform. With our Unitarian friends, we certainly should insist upon the essential Unity of God — but not so as to reject the Trinitarian doctrine. We place no stress whatever upon the numerical idea, because we do not believe that God can be measured by any human arithmetic, and this division belongs rather to a necessity of the human mind than to any division of the substance of the Deity. We do not uphold any such theory of the Divine Nature as that which would distribute it into three minds — three wills — three conscious natures. Our language is to this effect; “God has revealed himself as the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost — *the same* in respect to divine essence, whatever distinction there may be in some respects.” We do not “undertake to fathom the interior being of God, and tell how that is composed.” If we did, we are in no worse position than are others who object to our statement, that such a Being is inconceivable to their minds. If for that reason the Trinity must be rejected, for the same also must the Unity of the Divine existence be rejected; for in that form He is equally inconceivable.

“Who art thou O man! Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection. It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” A God that could be *conceived* by the human mind must be finite—that is, be no God. Unity or Trinity alike—God is an infinite mystery. We submit to the language of revelation, and believe that the Three are united in one glorious Godhead, while as in the baptismal formula there is a distinction made between them.

Not to detain you too long upon the particular points—not to insist that there shall be “*five points*” and these made by a man’s hand—Calvin’s or Fuller’s, or that of any other,—or be expressed in one particular method,—for Baptists have always maintained the *largest liberty* in thinking for themselves,—we will glide over the leading doctrines, simply indicating the line of our proofs.

Man’s nature and necessities is the centre around which our Theology revolves. Starting with him, we have to do with a depraved nature. We do not say that he sins and then becomes depraved, which would be simply a truism, but we say that there is a something in his inmost life which makes sin as universally an attribute of humanity as is intelligence or the possession of a conscience; a moral

virus infused into his very being, that as clearly distinguishes between an angelic and a human nature as the disposition of a lamb is distinguished from that of a tiger. We guard our statement here for the thousandth time from a misapprehension. We say that this virus belongs to his *religious nature*, and not so much to his social qualities; that it leaves him without holiness of heart; without a right disposition towards God; with an atheistic nature that loves to be without God in the world. It says nothing about his integrity or his amiability, any more than it describes his intellectual and physical strength or weakness.

If this be our true condition, then regeneration by a superhuman agency becomes a great necessity, and men must be born again, not by the will of man but of God. Redemption carries along with it the idea of vicariousness, the effect of which is salvation by grace. This is attained, not by the merit of human deeds, but by the justifying righteousness appropriated by faith, through which the believer is kept unto the salvation *ready to be revealed in the last time*.

These form a distinct basis of doctrines, and all of them must stand or fall together. The forms of expression may perhaps be improved; but the substance of these must remain. Viewed from the stand-point of philosophy, they are coherent, and we are not sur-

prised to hear this statement from one like Lord Bollingbroke: "Those doctrines are certainly doctrines of the Bible, and if I believe the Bible I must believe them."

While these are so received, we are not conscious of any diminution of motives to exert every particle of moral power which any one may have. Nor do we believe that this view places any sinner in a discouraged state, as if he could do nothing whether to promote or retard his salvation. On the contrary, he can do whichever he pleases. He has within himself all the proper conditions of accountability. He can resist the influences of the Spirit, and he can seek its aid. Let him do the first, or fail to do the second, and his blood is on his own head; to himself clings, and must ever cling, all the guilt of his own ruin. Whenever that comes it is a *final ruin*; just as when salvation secured in this life is a final salvation. If heaven shall ever cease to be the portion of the righteous, then hell — its unquenchable fires all extinguished — will no longer be the portion of the wicked. That law of interpretation which destroys one must affect both, and equally; for throughout the Bible they stand on the same time-basis. Our moral sentiments have nothing to do in the decision of a question of this sort. God does not always try to please us, nor act in harmony with our moral sentiments, as thousands and millions

of sufferers can tell. He acts as a righteous Governor, which is somewhat different, in important respects, from a Parent.

Of course it is not expected that I should argue each of these doctrines. The proofs fill huge volumes of divinity, and no skill of mine can pack them into a single discourse, much less into that small portion of this which I had assigned to this topic.

We pass now to those principles which, in our earlier history, placed us in a separate and peculiar position, but which have now become so widely diffused and adopted, that they are no longer our exclusive property.

Lest I should commit both injustice and folly, let me delay long enough here to acknowledge the obligations we owe to others around us. If we have given to others, we have received from them. If we have taught them, in some instances, better principles, I think that whoever reads our history of the last two hundred years, will concede that they have taught us better manners. Their example and influence have elevated the standard of learning among us, and their liberality has often provoked us to love and good works. We have witnessed their order in the house of God, and their steady and consistent adherence to principle, and we have copied it — partially at least.

We claim the precedence in defending and establishing the following principles: —

*The popular form of Church Government was first restored among us.* We understand it to be the teaching of the ablest of our church historians that a hierarchy was not the original form of the church. This was a plant of slow growth; but in the gradual progress of centuries had reached such gigantic proportions that in the Middle Ages it brooded in one dense shadow over all Christendom. The leaders in the Reformation scarcely touched the fundamental principles of church government. They were occupied fully with their attacks upon the Papacy, and a most important part of their work was left incomplete.

From the earliest organization into churches, both on the Continent and in England, the Baptists insisted that all the members of the household of faith formed a brotherhood, and stood upon the footing of an essential quality. So they claimed to be taught by the Scriptures, and maintained that the whole body was "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," thus excluding the idea of a ruling class. They believed, indeed, that God had distributed various gifts for the edification of the church, and "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." But these were given not to legislate or to rule. They might guide by their instructions, but had no power to coerce or subject to their authority. Dr. Williams correctly states the sentiments, not less of our churches now than those of the sixteenth century,

when he says, “ The church is not a mere nest of anarchy ; nor yet is it a scene of spiritual despotism, where a Diotrephe rules in the pastorate, or an oligarchy in the deaconship crushes pastor and people beneath its iron rod.” They constructed their churches on the plan which D’Aubigné says was the primitive one. “ The church was in the beginning a community of brethren.” Like some other principles revived at the Reformation, this idea of a popular and independent form of church government was compelled to pursue a circuitous and obscure path, while avoiding the malice and tyranny of persecuting hierarchies ; and no small obscurity lies upon some portions of its earlier history. This was to have been expected. Men engaged in a death-struggle for principles of vital importance to the faith — as the Baptists certainly were — and who, at a date as early as the reign of Henry VIII. had to seal their testimony with their blood — not as has usually been the case, by solitary individuals, but by twenties and thirties at a time — had more important work to do than to discuss questions of mere polity. They gave to these but few words, wisely preferring to shew their faith by their works, and constructed such churches as they had the opportunity of forming on the model of the New Testament. They performed this work half a century before Robert Brown planted the principles of church independence on the soil of Holland. During his time they were like the strangers

addressed by St. Peter, “scattered” widely throughout England and Germany; and wherever found would never permit Prince or Pontiff, Council or Convention, to interfere with the discipline or government of the church. Whom they would, they elected to the pastorate, without the permission of any other church or body of men; and when they thought proper they dissolved that relation in the same spirit of independence. Agreeing in the fundamental principles of church order with the Brownists, who are of a later origin, from whom the venerated Pilgrim Fathers of New England descended, they with a more steady consistency practised upon the principles of a pure democracy.

Self-government in the church unquestionably originated the idea of self-government in the State. The church taught the State how to govern and exercise its rights. It is well known that the example of a Baptist church, settling all its questions by the vote of the majority, yet under such conditions as sacredly to guard the rights of the minority, first suggested to the constructive mind of Thomas Jefferson — years before he sketched that immortal Declaration — the same idea that was inaugurated in the formation of this Federal Union. His own words on this subject are that he “considered the Baptist Church the only true democracy then existing in the world, and had concluded that it would be the best plan for the government of these American Colonies.” That idea is

closely interwoven into the whole of the American mind. It has become the ruling idea in all our Ecclesiastical institutions. The monarchic forms must retire before it, or if they continue to exist, one of the essential conditions of their continuance must be that they shall learn gracefully and as in meek reverence to submit.

We rejoice to yield what at our commencement was our distinct peculiarity. We do not intend by any means to abdicate the principle or apostatize from the practice, but we are animated by the thought that while, in this respect, we maintain our allegiance to the truth of Christ, we can at the same time hold "close communion" with the Christian churches around us.

Another point of restored communication between us and the Christian churches around us relates to *the nature of a call to the Christian ministry*.

Once it was peculiar to Baptist churches to maintain that no one had any scriptural right—which means that no one had any right whatever—to exercise the functions of the sacred office, excepting those who were called of God, as Aaron was. They insisted that in Boston and elsewhere, in these last days, as in Ephesus and everywhere in the earliest days of the church, it was the especial prerogative of the Holy Ghost to make men overscers of the church; and that there was still in His hands who holds all power in

heaven and *earth*, ability to make His will known to such as he intended should preach His Gospel. In this view they were opposed practically by nearly all of the churches in Christendom. But little more than a century ago Whitefield stirred up a great storm of wrath here in New England, by taking the same ground with them, and insisting that “unconverted ministers are the bane of the Christian church.” Gilbert Tennent was denounced as an unreasonable fanatic, because he dared to preach and print a sermon “On the Dangers of an Unconverted Ministry.” Solomon Stoddard, in his day, among all the clergy in New England—a son of Kish that towered above them all, from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people—a choice man and a goodly; yet even Solomon Stoddard, in his “Appeal to the Learned,” assumes, as Mr. Tracy says, “that an unconverted minister is bound to continue in the performance of ministerial duties”! He labors to prove that *unconverted* men may be *admitted* into the ministry. They were not his first choice, but they might be chosen; and what Solomon Stoddard—*the* Solomon of Massachusetts—could do, a great many of less piety and learning could more easily do. The Baptists never could.

No doubt some among them, in the fervor of their piety and zeal, made their claims in reference to a call to the ministry appear extravagant and ridiculous. Il-

literate men, who had not the genius of Bunyan, but who had the same glowing love of the Savior, spoke from their own experience, and when their words ran like a spring torrent let loose from the snowy mountains and leaping down the hills, they believed themselves supernaturally helped, and laid a claim in consequence to something very like miraculous inspiration. This idea became popular. Hence their superstitious aversion to written sermons, and their contempt for an educated ministry. Hence many an illiterate man who had not mastered the lore of Dilworth's spelling-book, felt sure that he was qualified to teach the masters in Israel. His heart could not rest, because there was a voice from above constantly calling him to leave the anvil, or plough, or loom, and go and preach the preaching of which he was bidden of God. Hence came the proverb respecting the spoiling of a good deacon to make a poor minister. But the error was quite harmless, and had the skill—which many a skilful physician has not—to cure itself. We are a sobered, and I fear that we are becoming a *tame* people. Yet we bate not one jot or tittle of the claim. Indeed we need not, for, so far as I understand, the moral sense of the Christian community has settled down into a substantial agreement with us.

All think that something more is needed to make a Christian minister than a talent for public speaking,

and an ability to talk thirty or forty minutes; something more than the drill of the college and the seminary can give. They insist not only upon the possession of piety — using that term perhaps in somewhat different senses, according to the particular theology of those employing it — but they demand further a distinct specific conviction that their duty lies in this direction, and not in another. They must believe that they would sin were they to refuse to obey that conviction. The man whose views are so peculiarly accommodating, whose impressions of duty are so mild, that he could just as readily, were an opportunity offered, do something else than preach, the serious moral sentiments of the community would bid do *anything else rather than preach*.

Under the general head of accomplished agreements, you will not excuse me should I omit that distinctly Baptistie idea, *Freedom of Conscience*. Not very long ago it was charged upon us, as our peculiar sin, that we insisted “that the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws.” Dr. Soame, in 1589, thought such a heresy ought to be answered, and tried to do it. The great Reformer of Scotland, John Knox, thought that it did not deserve any other answer than by the sword, and declares it his purpose “to lay the same to their charge if he should apprehend any in a Commonwealth where justice may be ministered against blasphemers, as the word of God

requireth." The popular sentiment two hundred years ago was that this and cognate doctrines made the men who advocated them "deserve to have their heads in the custody of young Gregory, to make buttons for hempen loops." The wisest men could not conceive that religion could survive so dangerous a license as that which would commit every man to the decisions of his own conscience on the doctrines of religion. All agreed in one respect. *They* were unwilling to be coerced. They believed *that* to be persecution; and with equal unanimity each party thought themselves violently wronged, when the stronger party attempted to control their consciences with their fines and punishments. *They* ought to be let alone, not because persecution in itself was wrong and always wrong, but because their doctrines were true, a plea made always by every party, and equally available to all. They sometimes went so far as to demand *toleration*, an act of grace which no man was ever yet qualified to extend to any other. God only can tolerate. Every man is just as much tolerated as he tolerates, because every man has an equal right to the principles which he cherishes as any other can possibly have.

This is the principle of the Baptist denomination from its beginning and from which they have never swerved so much as a hair's breadth, and in the maintenance of which they have never vacillated. To the

defence of this we gave to England her first and her last martyr, and if the cause of truth shall ever require we are ready to add others. They have not only maintained that others had no right to coerce their consciences, but they have insisted that *no one* possesses any such right, and any attempt to control the conscience by law is a grand impertinence; if executed it is a gross fraud. Conscience is above all human jurisdiction. John Locke with equal justice, candor and truth, says, “the Baptists from the beginning were the friends and advocates of *absolute* liberty—just and true liberty—equal and impartial liberty.” History confirms that. One of the early Baptist churches of England, addressed James I., then on the throne, in these words, clearly defining their principles: “We do unfeignedly acknowledge the authority of earthly magistrates, God’s blessed ordinance, and that all earthly rule and command appertain unto them; let them command what they will, we must obey them either to do or suffer. But all men must let God alone with His right who is to be Lord and Lawgiver of the soul; and not command obedience for God when He commandeth none.” . . . . . “Earthly authority belongs to earthly kings, but spiritual authority belongeth to that spiritual king, who is king of kings.” Our early history has often been alluded to as one of rebellion, as the wild outburst of the mad men of Münster against the peace and good

order of society. A more critical acquaintance with the political factions of Germany separates between the true Baptists and those fanatics.

Mr. Bancroft in his brilliant eulogium on Roger Williams, seems to attribute to *him* the discovery of a truth which had been announced long before he came to New England, before he took orders in the English church, and while he was ranging among the hills of Wales, a mere boy, just entering his teens. To him unquestionably belongs the honor of being the first Christian legislator who formally recognized this great principle in the establishment and administration of any government. But the principle on which he built his government was boldly advocated, and had been for a whole generation, by all the Baptist churches then in the realm. They took this ground, while even their much loved friend and fellow-sufferer, the excellent Mr. Robinson, of Leyden, in this respect abiding in Papal darkness, was earnestly advocating the duty of the magistrate "to punish civilly religious actions," and maintaining that he is "*by compulsion* to repress public and notable idolatry, as also to provide that the truth of God in his ordinance be taught and published; and by some penalty to provoke his subjects universally unto hearing for their instruction and conversion,—yea to *inflict the same upon them if after due teaching they offer not themselves unto the church.*" He ought to have been per-

suaded that "the Lord has yet more truth to break forth out of His holy word." But we have acquired only tardily the right to blame him, after having retained almost two hundred years longer on our Statute-books a law which taxed men for the support of religion in opposition to their consciences. Thank God, that now at last we are all agreed in the one great principle of Religious Freedom. "Whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

We have in our progress seen a gradual approximation of different denominations towards each other. Our third topic brings us to the point where as a denomination we diverge from all those around us. Having made such progress in the things already specified, the question may here be started, why not for the sake of peace, and to diminish the existing differences, dismiss those that remain and come together into one family and live in mutual harmony? It does not require any special grace, that I can conceive, to make one willing that another act so friendly a part as to adopt his principles. Is he willing to reciprocate the kindness and lay the same tax upon himself that he imposes on others? Can he, or can I, do that on such conditions, if we are conscientious Christian men? To do so would be simply to offend God for the sake of pleasing man. Not only as a Baptist, but vastly more because I am account-

able to God, I cannot consent to an arrangement on such principles. If we are not separated by our interpretation and application of the truths contained in the Bible, embracing principles of vital importance to the well-being of the church; if we could surrender our differences without damaging what we believe to be the word of God, on subjects which are not left open to accommodation; then we not only *might* do it, but we ought to *do it*; we are becoming guilty of the sin of schism every hour by not doing it. But if it relate to a matter in which the will of God is distinctly expressed, then we had better do anything rather than this; we had better die under tortures than do it. We had better be rejected by all the world than do it. Here on this point I could willingly lay open my whole soul before the religious community—and I believe that the sentiment of the denomination would agree with mine. •

Were there nothing concerned in this question more important than denominational affinities and preferences, arising from different tastes, produced by different modes of culture or of association, then, in my judgment, none of these could offer a valid defence for the distributions of the church of Christ into sections. When manners and measures only are concerned then we ought to be accommodating to mutual differences. Then each should seek “to please his neighbor for his good to edification.” When the ques-

tion is one of mere forms it is worse than idle to wrangle about it. A Liturgy is not anything desired by me, still if my brother can worship God better with its aid, I cannot oppose him. I could easily waive all differences of this sort, and say as the young Quaker to Whitefield, "Friend George, I am as thou art. I am for bringing all to the life and power of the ever-living God, and therefore, if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my hat, I will not quarrel with thee about thy gown."

But if there lie in the way to this a necessity for abdicating the truth of God, carefully and prayerfully ascertained, then whoever can abandon that truth is not worthy of Christian fellowship. We submit to our hearers, that if we, as a denomination, with our present convictions of truth, could perform an act so atheistic as to set aside the authority of God, we should deserve to be disfellowshipped by every church and every Christian. Let us dare to do that, and in our practice we confound the eternal distinction between truth and error. We deal with truth as if it were error. If, with the sentiments we now hold, we could make up our minds to treat on terms of friendship with certain usages which have long had a corporate existence, *and which seem to us to subvert fundamental doctrines of the gospel*, then by our conduct, *which is the true voice of the soul*, do we not utter these two monstrous sentiments? Do we not say that error

is *harmless* and truth *worthless*? In yielding to error, we sacrifice truth. Let that be done—organize that sentiment into churches, and both truth and religion must speedily take their flight from earth to the heaven whence they came. Before any one takes a step in that direction, it were well to reflect more carefully upon this subject. I am of very little consequence to the world. Only a few individuals are. But every truth of God, and conversely every error of man, is of vast consequence. Our lives are but flitting shadows and will soon be over. If our errors were all our own, could we gather them up and carry them with us out of the world, and make them lie down in the same grave with us, did they not follow us beyond to the future life, *then* were it of small consequence what we accept as truth, or reject as error. But it is not so. *We* are the channels through which these must flow onwards and downwards, and perpetuate and reproduce themselves. Doubtless Bryant spoke as much truth as poetry, when he said,

“ Truth crushed to earth will rise again,  
The eternal years of God are hers ;  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies among his worshippers.”

But O ! the dreary march of desolation by which these results are accomplished. What souls may be undone and forever lost. This is the great lesson of

all church history — sad and sickening to every benevolent heart. That man is little to be envied who will willingly repeat any part of the lesson, and by his conduct consent to entail this descending curse. Because we cannot consent to this we dissent from the views held by those churches called evangelical, on these three points:

First. On the qualifications for membership.

Second. On the right of admission to membership.

Third. On the extent of the rights to the Communion Table of communicants belonging to different churches.

Were these points adjusted, we see nothing to hinder our cordial union with others.

These differences I have stated in both their logical and time-order. This, too, is the order of their importance; the first being greatest in our own estimation, although this does not seem to be so understood by others. With us the great question is, and always has been, what sort of persons are, by the conditions laid down in the New Testament, eligible to membership in the church? Some say, believers *and their children*. Baptists always say, believers — only those who in the judgment of a Christian charity may be regarded as such. We all believe in “experiencing religion,” as antecedent to any profession of it. We also believe that this must be a conscious experience. We think that it may have a sudden development,

quick as that of the Philippian jailer, or gradual as that of Zinzendorf; but whether sudden or gradual, that it is always the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. In our past history we have laid considerable stress upon such a consciousness as might be noticed, and an experience to which a date might be assigned; not however because we think that every one must pass through the same type of conviction, or the same form of conversion, but because more frequently there is a general similarity of outline. We suppose that a well-conducted Christian education tends perceptibly to modify the form of individual conversions, not only in promoting an *earlier conversion*, but rendering it, to use the emphatic terms of Dr. Bushnell, less "explosive," less an "*ictus Dei*." But in whatever mode it is manifested, we insist that one must be born again or he cannot enter the kingdom of God; that none are entitled to join the visible, who have not, by grace, become members of the invisible church. The adoption of any other term of membership seems to us unwarranted by the gospel, and full of danger. The Scriptures speak of no other sort of members than believing ones. They insist upon faith as the pre-requisite of baptism. They describe the church as made up of such as have separated themselves from the world, and as having a spiritual fellowship with God. All that is said of their character, duties, and privileges, seems to us to require that

change of which I have spoken. We make no account of age, or the circumstances under which individuals become united to Christ. They may be veterans, “silvered o'er with age,” or they may be little children. They may come singly, or come in households; but they may come only on the condition that they are believers.

We can no more conceive of a middle state *here* between the church and the world, than we can of a middle state *hereafter* between Abraham’s bosom and the place of torment. A state in which an individual is not in the church, and not out of it—a member and not yet a member—is to us a contradiction in terms. How any one can receive that rite by which alone a profession is made, and not yet be a professor, utterly perplexes us. Equally difficult is it for us to discover why one who has thus made a profession should not be allowed all the privileges that belong to it.

We wish to set forth our sentiments and position distinctly on this topic. It is not a prejudice against that which, out of courtesy to the sentiments of others we will call infant baptism, that puts us in the posture of opponents. My impression is, that almost any one of us would have no strenuous opposition to offer, were that rite to be held up simply as a voluntary act of consecration of a child publicly to the service of God. If that were clearly shown to afford assistance to the parent in educating it for God, or that it

was followed by such moral effects that it secured the subsequent conversion, or had any appreciable effect in facilitating that important end, we might accede to its administration *on that ground*, differing as it does from the scriptural representation, which never speaks of baptism as a *parental* duty, but only as a *personal* duty. But we can discover no such connection, and there is to us an entire lack of evidence that any moral influence whatever is exerted. We cannot see that the unbaptized children of parents who do not believe in the rite, are therefore placed in any more unfavorable situation, and cannot be as thoroughly educated, and thereby brought into as favorable a position for conversion as any other. Nor do we see that education receives any additional force or benefit from it.

But here is our greatest difficulty. The ordinance is set before and enjoined upon us as of *divine authority*, and so enjoined as to conflict with—and if it were fully carried out, to render impossible the baptism of every believer, unless all would become Anabaptists in the true sense of that term. Every *believer* is commanded by the Savior to be baptized. But this rite prevents obedience to that command. It does also attempt to bind the conscience as being of divine institution. It would seldom, if ever, be performed, except as an act of obedience to God. To us it is altogether wanting that authority. The lan-

gnage of one of our number, as recently uttered, is the language of all. "It is a mere nullity as to any relation to a covenant. In that respect it has just so much validity as it has authority, and authority from the head of the church, it has none at all."

Thus speaking, I have not met at all the conditions implied in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, partly because that is an un-Protestant doctrine, and rejected by almost the whole of the Protestant churches, but principally because its basis is so utterly diverse from that on which we have been discoursing, that we did not come even in sight of it. Our whole modes of reasoning, of feeling and of expression, are thoroughly saturated with that individualism which brings the gospel directly to each person. We can hardly appreciate the notion that describes the outward church as a distinct and almost separate organism, having a life of its own, apart from the individual members, and analogous to that life-principle in the human body which assimilates foreign substances to itself. Then, *were this a reality*, the rite has immense practical importance every way. It is the medium of contact between the individual and the Holy Ghost, and ordinarily, to say the least, must be indispensable to salvation. But we reject the whole system, root and branch, as utterly of Anti-christ. The faintest rudiments of it do not manifest themselves to us in the gospels. As we read them, the thought is of fre-

quent recurrence that one must be *in Christ* by a spiritual conception before he becomes a member of his body, the church. The *individual* is he to whom Christ comes, and with whom he takes up his abode, and makes his body a temple of the Holy Ghost.

We do not feel under a necessity to enter into an extended discussion of our second topic, and can only hint the outline, or, perhaps better, the direction of our argument. We maintain that Baptism is a specific and distinctly defined act, and that any other action, however nearly it may approach to this, cannot rightfully be substituted in the place of this. We reject, as entirely untrue, the idea that we contend for *one mode of baptism*. That has never been made a question by us, in any proper scriptural sense. We care nothing how a baptism is performed, whether by standing or kneeling, by a backward or by a forward motion ; but, only as the word implies itself, that it be a baptism. We come to the consideration of the rite, with this simple inquiry : What did the Savior include in his command to baptize ? What did the apostles understand by that command ? On the literal, primary meaning of the word there can now hardly be said to be any disagreement among scholars. In our argument it has always been Tertullian against Tertullian. We might detain you a long time with citations from authors whose practice seems to us to contradict their concessions, in which they state clearly as any Baptist can

ever do, that the primary meaning of the original word is to immerse; and they tell us that this, beyond all question, was the apostolic practice. They say, and we agree with them on this point, that the word has also derived meanings which do not involve an immersion. But we maintain that if the word be used in a tropical sense in the command of our Savior, then it is *their* duty to prove that; and *not only that*, but also to prove *which of the several tropical* meanings which it has is the one intended by our Savior. We cannot believe that *all its tropical meanings* are crowded into one enactment. Indeed, we believe that there is *no trope* in the case, for the very common sense reason stated by Ernesti, "that laws, history, and didactic works seldom admit tropes." And again, for this still stronger reason which he gives in these words: "There can be no certainty at all in respect to the interpretation of any passage, unless a kind of necessity compels us to affix a particular sense to a word; which sense, as I have said before, MUST BE ONE, and unless there are special reasons for a *tropical* meaning, it *must* be the *literal* sense." Which, then, is *the one* sense? Is it sprinkling? No one claims so much as that. No one has yet accepted the challenge of Dr. Carson, and proved that the word used in the New Testament, (*βαπτιζω*,) to express this ordinance, is *ever* used to signify anything less than immersion. Not one of the illustrations which they have quoted as having another

meaning, contains the word which is always employed to designate the Christian rite.

The same answer would be given to the question, Does it always mean pouring? All reply, no. Is it immersion? Bretschneider says, "An entire immersion belongs to the nature of baptism." The modern Greeks, who read the ancient text as fluently as the modern, have the same idea. Arguing against some ablution short of immersion, one of them says, "*One* mode, therefore, of baptizing we learn from the New Testament, that by immersion; and immersion is no other than an entire covering by means of, or in, water." We cannot believe that three acts so distinct as sprinkling, pouring, and immersing, were enacted by the Savior. They are separate rites, and one *or* the other — not one *and* the other — was enjoined. Which of them was specified, distinctly, primarily, is agreed in, as I have said, by all of distinguished scholarship; and the belief of that can hardly be said to constitute our peculiarity, which rather consists in this, that no man, or body of men, have any right to change the form of the statute. All tradition — all that is short of the Savior's command — fails to persuade us that a substitution may be made. We must adhere to that, not because we might judge it to be a more solemn and impressive rite, but just because it is commanded. We might prove that its administration is attended with inconvenience, or our notions of propriety might

become so finieal that it should seem indecent. But not from any such argument could we devise a warrant to neglect it. If, instead of this rite, Christ had commanded us to wear a specified costume, no better than that we now wear, and perhaps in some respects more inconvenient, on his authority as our Lord and Master, we would do it. And if this deference to his word entitles us to the charge of bigotry, then we accept that, and bind it as a frontlet upon our brow, and will glory in wearing it to the grave.

We confess that in one of the aspects of this subject there may easily arise a perplexity. A fair-minded man may ask, why this exceeding strenuousness upon this one point? Is not every act of disobedience to Christ, in any one particular, a trampling upon the same authority? Are Baptists so much distinguished above all others for conscientious piety? I claim no such thing for them. We have sat reverently on the lowest form before men whom we could name — an honored and a saintly list — who were in Christ before us. We honor the religious decorum that prevails among, and the large benevolence that flows in an untiring, copious stream from, and the mercantile probity that grows up in other communions. Then why this difference? I answer, it arises from its different relations. It is one thing to be derelict to principle in private conduct, and quite another, and a worse, to organize a corrupt principle into an institution, and

establish it for all time. In that we include a multitude. We not only do a wrong, but we corrupt a doctrine, and thereby we teach men to do as we have done. Place any other act on this ground, and if any Baptist refuses to treat it in the same way, brand him as recreant to his principles. Speaking in the name of the Baptist principle, I disown and denounce him.

Come we now at last to the great trial of our faith — the question of Communion. Perhaps it were the true philosophical way to inquire, as preliminary to all discussion, how much we differ from those around us. Not, as I think, on the fundamental principle that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance instituted *within the church*, and designed *for* the church, and to be celebrated *by* each local church alone, when they are met together. On all of these points among the churches generally there can scarcely be said to be any disagreement. It was not designed as one of the means of grace to bring men to Christ, as preaching is, but for those who had entered into the church by baptism. We do not find a single instance in the New Testament of the admittance of an individual to the Supper previous to baptism. Whenever any order is stated, it is that converts were baptized and after that “continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread.” This order has been adopted throughout the churches of all denominations. In the Catholic Church, baptism, “by which persons

are made children of God and washed from sin," is always antecedent to confession, confirmation and communion. So in the Episcopal Church, "those only that by baptism have been grafted into the church" are treated as members of the church. The Presbyterian symbols declare that "baptism is a sacrament for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the church." The same principle is contained in the Discipline of the Methodist Church, in these words: "Let none be received into the church until they have met on trial at least six months, and have been baptized." The idea of all is the same in this respect, that only by submitting to the rite of baptism is any one entitled to the privileges of the church. So says the Baptist, and refuses the Lord's Supper to all the unbaptized; pious Quakers, who are shut out from all communions, or nearly so; and all the pious who lay no claim to having been baptized; and those who have taken substitutes for baptism; many of whom, he maintains, have failed by not doing anything to indicate that they have become separate from the world. They do not so much as claim to have been baptized on profession of faith. Our principle is the same with that of other churches. Why is that principle which is thought valid in all other churches, so mischievous and unchristian in ours? By what we firmly believe is an incorrect interpretation of the law of baptism, more persons are included within its patronage,

and that is all the difference. We, at least, are no more responsible for the principle than are all others which have from the primitive age been regulated by it.

While this is all true in reference to habitual communion — which all would have retained within the church, the question is asked, why always insist upon this strict interpretation? When individuals belonging to various denominations are together in one place, why not together *occasionally* celebrate the Lord's Supper? This would present a lovely sight to the world, and would obviate those objections which arise from the differences among Christians. We confess that the motive assigned is not to us particularly cogent. We are far from the belief that the rejection of the gospel comes mainly, or in any perceptible degree, from this cause. Let all Christians in this city unite on the next Sabbath in such a celebration, and we should have not one infidel the less among us. This would gratify the sentimentalism of certain individuals, but would not settle any disputes. The real trouble is with Christians, not those who know nothing of the true (*κοινωνία*) fellowship. Why not then remove these obstructions, so far as to allow of occasional communion? Because we can make no distinction in the principle between the occasional and the permanent. We believe that “exceptions should bend to general rules, and not general rules to exceptions.”

Believing as we do that it is a church ordinance, there is a manifest inconsistency in an act extending church fellowship to one in such a condition, that we cannot, while he remains in that condition, hold the church relation with him.

We make a broad distinction between church fellowship and Christian fellowship. To enjoy and to augment this last belongs to each Christian, irrespective of names. This depends on the employment of no external symbols. It springs up spontaneously wherever real Christians become acquainted with each other, and is entirely independent of church organizations.

How then? Are we always to be separate? Are we never "to come in the unity of the faith?" None have a deeper interest in this question than we. Our separation comes not from insensibility or indifference. Beautiful indeed is the long-delayed vision of a unified church. I wish that I could agree with you all on all the great questions of religion. I wish that an occasion had never existed for the delivery of a series of discourses like that now engaging your attention, and yet I rejoice in my heart of hearts at the magnanimity that conceived the plan, and the liberality which has conducted it to the present stage. God forgive, if I have said one word inconsistent with Christian charity, or framed a sentence so as to wound any true Christian sensibility. We would not exag-

gerate differences. Our hearts yearn as do yours for that day when all God's watchmen shall see eye to eye — when all Christians shall be one, "even as the Father and the Son are one." But we do not expect that this will be brought about by the vote of majorities any more than it will be by the cant of sectarians denouncing sectarianism. The evil is too great to be cured by words. Unity can only come by the progress of truth. God's laws, that regulate the spiritual and the material universe, are alike in this. Each law is *one* everywhere. Whoever maintains the truth in a Christian spirit, is promoting the ultimate union of the church. Every one who searches for and obeys the truth — every one who labors to become pure in heart promotes the union of the church. The great hindrance now is the want of a perfect, holy life. I cannot believe that the human mind is so made that diversity of religious beliefs is a necessity, any more than a contrariety of mathematical axioms is a necessity. We do not need different systems of astronomy to adapt themselves to the human mind. Why then as we step beyond the stars and speak of heavenly things, do we require diverse systems of theology? When the world has attained to that purity which will contemplate the truths of religion as impartially as it comes to study the phenomena of Nature, we may hope that our party lines will completely fade away. To this end we have only to cherish the life that Christ

imparts. The law of life always works towards a uniform result. We do not need to instruct, or guide, or attempt in any way to force the acorn to conform to any mould or pattern, or to deck itself with a particular shade of color. Leave it to the tuition of that law of life wrapped up in it in the dawn of the second day of the creation, which has not yet spent one particle of its original force, and it will develop the majestic oak, strong and sound to the very heart. Its form may vary. It may have fewer or more leaves and branches. It may be twisted and deformed with nodosities, but through all variations, it remains unmistakably the oak. So let the law of Christ Jesus develop itself in the human soul, and only one kind of beings will come of that. There may then be diversities in developments, in taste, in knowledge, but the redeemed will differ only as one star differeth from another star— IN GLORY. They will all be Christians, sound and strong to the very heart. Amen.

## FOURTH LECTURE.

BY

REV. NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH.

— *adit.*

137



## IV.

### WHY AM I A TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONALIST?

---

"FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU, SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED." — 1 Cor. ii. 2.

THE question to be answered in this discourse, is, "Why am I, from love to God and man, a TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONALIST?"

Christianity, no doubt, began with one form of church government, and one system of ordinances; for the same reason that it had, of course, a definite system of fundamental truths. Some of our modern Christian missions among a heathen or pagan people, probably afford a good illustration of the beginning and early progress of Christianity. The missionaries are at first necessarily the controlling power in the churches, which they gather, while they are constantly aiming at the preparation of the native converts to supply their churches with native pastors, and to transact their own affairs independently of foreign aid, except so far as they may associate themselves as churches, for mutual counsel, yet without jurisdiction. But the missionaries thenceforth cease to exercise any official influence. This

seems to us the natural order in which the first Christian churches arose, each of them containing within itself the elements of government and discipline.

In the first chapter of the Acts, we find the body of the disciples choosing even an apostle, to supply the place of Judas. This is fatal, we think, to all claim of apostolical succession in the ministry; for, if the apostles had not power even to fill a vacancy in their own number, the right of appointing ministers was not peculiar to them. In the sixth chapter of the Acts, “the multitude of the disciples” also “chose deacons.” Some of them preached; but this was wholly independent of the object for which they were chosen; because in giving the reason for the appointment of deacons, the apostles drew a distinction between “the ministry of the word,” and “serving tables.”\* Thus in the Christian church, at the very beginning, the people, and not the apostles and ministry, were the appointing power.

When local churches were established, the disciples no longer acted in one body, as they did at first in Jerusalem. Paul writes “to the church at Corinth” respecting the discipline, by the church itself, of an incestuous member. He speaks of “the churches,” not of “the church,” of Macedonia, Galatia, and Judea. As an inspired apostle, he felt at liberty to exhort, rebuke, and teach the churches which he had founded,

\* *Acts vi. 2, 4.*

while each of them was, nevertheless, a self-governing body. The Savior, also, directed his messages in the Revelation, to local "churches" — not to the "Church of Asia," but to the separate bodies of believers in different places, each of them having a separate existence, with an individual character and history, for which it was approved or blamed. This congregational form of church organization we believe to have been the original divine pattern; the apostles, like the first missionaries to a people, having had no successors in their peculiar relation, but the pastor and the church-officers of each body of believers taking their place. This is the impression which the New Testament makes upon us, and this is the origin of our Congregational order.

The theory of some is, that the order of apostles, as distinguished from the rest of the ministry, was designed to be perpetually represented in the Christian church by "bishops." But we are expressly told, that the difference between the apostles and other ministers was this: The apostles were *inspired witnesses* of Christ.\* Therefore Peter moved the disciples to fill the place of Judas, saying, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — beginning from the baptism of John unto the same day that he was taken up

\* Acts 1., 21, 22.

from us — must one be ordained *to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*”\* Paul vindicates his claim to the apostleship, by saying, “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” this being equivalent to the evidence which the other apostles had had, that Christ was risen. Therefore, all who claim to be successors of the apostles, are indeed, like Paul, “born out of due season,” but with no miracle, as he had, to atone for it. Their assumption that the apostles transmitted their office, is singularly confuted by some of their own writers when assailing the Papacy. Dr. Barrow, in his “Pope’s Supremacy,” says, “Such an office [the apostolic] *was not designed to continue by derivation.*” Again: “Neither did the apostles pretend to communicate it.” He quotes Bellarmine, who says: “And the bishops have no part of the true apostolic authority.”† It is also conceded by writers on Episcopacy, that “the terms ‘bishop,’ and ‘elder,’ or ‘presbyter,’ were, in the first instance, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the same order in the ministry.”‡ “The *name* bishop, which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriate to that office in Scripture. That name is given to presbyters or elders.”§ “The best

\* Acts 1: 21-22.

† Quoted in “View of Congregationalism, by George Punchard,” pp. 77, 78. This book cannot be too strongly recommended.

‡ Waddington’s Hist. of the Church, ch. II., § 2. “View of C.” p. 97.

§ Onderdonk’s Episcopacy Tested. p. 12. Do. do.

commentators, ancient and modern, have with reason inferred that the terms, [elder and bishop,] as yet denoted the same thing.”\*

Thus we find Congregationalism at the pure fountain head of Christianity. The first Christians began to conduct their affairs as a body of modern Congregationalists would do. If, at a subsequent time, the churches adopted different methods and rules, they departed from the original pattern. We base our form of church government on the very first acts of the Christian church after the ascension of Christ.

We do not find in Christ, and the apostles, and deacons, that model of three orders in the ministry the want of which, in the view of some, disfranchises the ministry of all Christendom except that of one denomination. For, if Christ was the great archetype of “Bishops,” who among the apostles took his place when he died? and who, at any time, was his first successor? That deacons were not a clerical order has already been proved by the distinction which the apostles expressly made between the employment of deacons and “the ministry of the word.” And the same arguments by which “three orders” would be proved to be essential in the Christian ministry could be used to prove that others were necessary:—“for He gave some, prophets,—and some, evangelists.”

\* Bloomfield's note on Acts xx. 17.—See Punction's View of Congregationalism, p. 97.

Many expressions might be cited from the great Apostle to the Gentiles which manifestly show that he was jealous for the liberty with which Christ had made his followers free from every yoke of bondage. Some of the half converted Jews sought to impose certain rites and ceremonies, and the observance of days, upon them. Paul, writing to the Galatians, and others, seems to have been indignant at this, and it was because Peter 'used dissimulation' on this subject that Paul 'withstood him because he was to be blamed.'

I forbear to put to sea, even coastwise, on the dark waters of ecclesiastical history. I have thus far confined myself to the New Testament. My own belief,—for the reasons named, and others might be given if this service allowed a full statement of them rather than an outline,—is, that the original model of Christian churches was one which secured to each body of believers the control of its own government and instruction. If this be granted, we are not careful to ascertain infallibly by what servants every church managed its affairs; but at the same time we do think that such officers as a Congregational Church now employs, and such only, are in the highest measure consonant with the possession and exercise by the body of believers, of liberty and self control. Yet it would violate this beautiful and noble idea of independency, to maintain that even a Congregational

Church, in the first century or now, could not institute, for the time being, an order of helpers in addition to those originally designated. Let the habits or prejudices of a people, for example, make it inexpedient for men to visit the sick, indiscriminately, for charitable purposes; the same necessity which suggested the idea of deacons, might make an order of deaconesses proper; and so we think the churches occasionally provided themselves with new internal arrangements, for religious purposes. Local circumstances, having their origin, if you please to call it so, in human frailties, soon led to discrepancies and divisions; and moreover, things which were adopted temporarily at first, began to claim divine authority, and fastened themselves to the church as a part of itself.

• We believe the Congregational form of church order to be the most favorable to the interests of the individual and of religion at large. Most if not all the objections to it lie equally against the preparedness or the capacity of men for self government; but to educate them for this, they must have responsibility laid upon them at the earliest possible moment, even at the risk of serious temporary mistakes. We hold that all who are capable of managing their own temporal concerns, and are qualified for admission to the Christian church, ought to have the entire control of their ecclesiastical affairs, and that the exercise of such control is one of the best means to develope private

character, and to give early vigor and stability to Christian institutions. Thomas Jefferson said that a little Baptist Church near his house in Virginia, which was governed on Congregational principles, was probably the only form of pure democracy which then existed in the world. The Church of Jesus Christ enjoys the right, derived from Him, and the ability, to use this form of government; which none of the princes of this world think it safe nor convenient for men to have in national affairs. We are in favor of this system as enabling each church to settle its own business and its difficulties within its own walls, or at the furthest, by consulting only a few neighbor churches, instead of agitating the whole body of churches in a section of the country, or being compelled to seek judicial decisions from the whole ministry when a few neighboring pastors and Christian brethren are as well able to issue them. We all have our difficult questions, cases of discipline, and, now and then, contentions; but that system of drainage is the best which conducts offensive things quietly beneath the surface, instead of spreading them for inspection and judgment over a large district on their way to oblivion.

Such ministers as Cotton, Wilson, Hooker, Stone, Davenport, and others, benefited clergymen in England, having fled from an established religion, and from what they deemed a yoke of bondage in religious forms and ordinances, devised a system between Inde-

pendency, which is the present Baptist form of Congregationalism, on the one hand, and Presbyterianism on the other. This was New England Congregationalism. It had a powerful reflex influence on the Puritans in the mother country, till, in the time of Cromwell, and under his protection, Congregationalism, or, as it was still called, Independency, made great progress, and at the present day it is an important and hopeful religious element in England, under the name of Congregationalism, where we cannot but think it is destined to accomplish a great work. Let us not be understood as maintaining the idea that a modern Congregational Church is, in all respects, the exact copy of a primitive, Christian church; all we claim is, that in our fundamental idea of self-government we retain the primitive type; and moreover we say, that whatever offices in a church impair the direct, immediate control, by a church, of its own affairs, did not exist in the first Christian churches, and they are repudiated now by Congregationalism. It differs from Episcopacy and from Episcopal Methodism, in confining the whole power of control within itself. It also differs from Methodism as to the system of individual accountability, which, in the Methodist communion, with its class-leaders reporting weekly to the minister the circumstances, more or less minutely, of each individual in the church, constitutes an authority from which, for many reasons, we prefer to be free. It differs from

Presbyterianism, in that the whole body of the church, and not a delegated part of it, transacts its affairs; and also, in not being accountable to extraneous authority, such as Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. It differs from Independency, or Baptist Congregationalism, in that it recognizes a relationship on the part of each church, to sister churches, in the way of counsel and mutual admonition, without the least subjection to foreign control, however; each church, in the last resort, having liberty to be, in every sense, Independent. Now in this particular feature of Congregationalism, as distinguished from the Independency of the Baptist churches, we have scriptural examples. The first churches interchanged special acts of fellowship; they found it needful and profitable, and it was natural and pleasant, so to do. It was one of the expedient and useful things suggested by the social nature of our religion. We read, for example, of "the brother" who was "chosen of *the churches*," to travel with their contributions; and, also, of the "brethren, the messengers of *the churches*."\*

We believe in the parity of the clergy. We find no foundation in the word of God for official precedence among ministers of the gospel. While ordination is necessary to constitute a man a minister, for the same reasons that the marriage ceremony is neces-

\* 1 Cor. viii., 18-23.

sary to complete a marriage contract, and while ministers alone can properly perform the public services of ordaining, we believe that "mutual election is that which doth essentiate the relation of a pastor to this or that particular church."\* We hold that churches, upon conference by their pastors and delegates, have the power to place men in the ministry as evangelists, or without pastoral charge. We believe that there is no office of "priests" in the Christian church.

It is a fundamental principle with us that the whole church, and not merely the pastor, nor a delegated body, shall have entire control in the admission and exclusion of members. This we think essential to the interests of religious liberty, a safeguard against clerical assumption, and against oligarchy. We are very strenuous for this principle, for with a great sum we purchased this freedom. It was for this, and for the associated right of electing our own religious teachers, and to be emancipated from the dictation of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, that we came out of great tribulation, the Puritans seeking refuge in Geneva, and in Holland, and finally in this waste howling wilderness.

The Pilgrim Fathers of New England were Congregationalists; the Mayflower was a Congregational Bethel; Plymouth Rock was at first the corner

\* Increase Mathers' Sermon, at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Appleton, Cambridge. See Cong. Dict., p. 264.

stone of a Congregational church. It was the bringing of Congregationalism here which gave an origin and early history to New England such as no other nation but the Hebrew has enjoyed.

As to the ordering of public worship, we prefer extemporaneous prayers, and passages of Scripture selected for the occasion, to the use of forms however unexceptionable or excellent. The power of adaptation to passing circumstances and frames of mind, the agreeable effect of variety in extemporaneous services, and the prominence thereby given to the preaching of the Gospel by enabling us to make the other parts of the service promote the effect of that great, divinely-appointed means of salvation, lead us to prefer our mode of worship to liturgical forms.

We believe that all modes of Baptism are valid. But we believe that, in some cases mentioned in the New Testament, immersion was impossible, and moreover that there is no case in which the probabilities are not on the side of some form of affusion. This mode is consonant with the liberal and pliant nature of Christianity, which, if immersion alone were valid, could not bestow its great initiating rite on the sick, on prisoners, on people at sea, in desert places, and in latitudes of extreme frost.

We believe that children are connected with their believing parents in the covenant promises of God, and that Baptism is given to them by God as his seal of

that covenant,—it being not our act, primarily, and not merely signifying consecration, but it is the act of God, sealing his promise and constituting a memorial on his part, and on the part of the parents and child. The connection of children with their parents, for good or ill, we see to be as old as the parental and filial relations.

It was specially recognised at the call of Abraham to be the founder of the church of believers in all ages of the world. A special re-appointment by Christ of this covenant relation, and the use of the initiating seal for the time being, we suppose would have been as superfluous, as would have been the re-publication by Christ of the commandment to keep holy one seventh part of time. The mention of the baptism of households by the apostles falls in naturally with our belief and confirms it.

Now, upon such things as these, relating to rites and forms, evangelical Christians differ, and separate into sects, each of them, however, professing to be animated by a higher motive than to promote its own peculiarities; but being persuaded that the conversion of the world to God, through the propitiation for sin, can best be effected, so far as they are concerned, by their being respectively employed under their several forms of church order.

**That Congregationalism is perfectly adapted to the**

highest state of human society, and is an adequate means to bring society into that state, we see in the early history of New England, its schools, colleges, churches, ministry, benevolent associations, the arts and sciences, and all that makes life happy. "The gold of that land is good; there is bdelium and the onyx stone." God brought the puritans here, and has wrought out by means of them the problem of man's capacity for self government in religion. If any inquire, what is the moral and religious influence of Congregationalism compared with other systems, we have only to mention, *New England*, where it has had its perfect work. With that result we are so far satisfied that we are willing to see rising communities, in our own and other lands, make trial of this system. Our New England Congregational Churches, with their fruits, stand before the world as an illustration of the practicability and safety of entrusting religious authority in the hands of the people themselves. We have less than two thousand Congregational Churches in the whole United States, including both Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregationalists, the latter having about three hundred churches, while the Presbyterians have four thousand churches, the Regular Baptists eight thousand, and the Methodists twelve thousand.

If it be said that if the Pilgrim Fathers had happened to be of any other denomination, New England might have been all which it now is, we answer, It was in

order to be Congregationalists that they came here; Congregationalism brought them here; it formed their institutions. It was because they lived on the pulse and water of Congregationalism that they thrived more than all they which did eat of the king's meat. Congregationalism as illustrated by them, stands ready to be adopted by other communities as fast as circumstances call for it. Our numerical disproportion ought to prevent us from adopting the narrow minded delusion that we are anything more than an important element in a great system of human society, while we cannot but feel grateful that God has, by these New England institutions, demonstrated the inherent excellence of the Congregational system.

Having alluded to the reasons why we differ from the Episcopalians, and also from the Independency of the Baptists, and from the latter also with respect to the mode and subjects of baptism, I will briefly allude to the discrepancies of faith between us and the Methodists, though in doing so I depart a little from the plan which I have proposed in the discourse, viz: to speak of doctrinal subjects last, and by themselves. But for the sake of finishing the subject of denominational differences of opinion, I will venture to refer, here, to the chief articles of faith in which the Methodists and the Congregationalists, the Arminian and the Calvinist, do not agree.

Our Methodist brethren sometimes call us "partial-

ists," because, as Congregationalists, Baptists, and, to so great a degree, Episcopilians, we believe in the infinite grace of God, determining to make willing and to save some of our fallen race, all of whom, if left to themselves, would have perished. The Methodist does not see how this belief allows liberty to man, and how it is consistent with offering salvation fully and freely to every human being. These offers, however, we all make as much as they; as our English Baptist brother, Andrew Fuller, whose system of divinity is esteemed by us second only to that of Jonathan Edwards, has shown for us in his Treatise on the Freeness of the Gospel.

We believe in the foreordination of every thing which ever comes to pass, even the actions of men and angels, and thus we rejoice that we have a God whose perfect administration can never be disturbed by any contingency, or by an event so small as not to have been contemplated and pre-arranged. While we believe this, we are not fatalists; for we are equally strenuous in our belief that the fore-knowledge of God, and his perfect control of his creatures, are not his misfortune, incapacitating him from having a moral government; but, on the contrary, that men are as responsible and accountable as though there were no divine foreknowledge. If we are asked how we reconcile such contradictory propositions, we answer, They do not fall out, and so we have no need to reconcile

them. They live together peaceably in our hearts, except when any are disposed to provoke them against each other. As our Methodist brethren accept the two classes of truths, relating to the human and the divine natures of Christ, and heed no upbraiding for inconsistency, so we accept the parallel truths of man's free agency and of sovereign grace, both as to the beginning of the Christian life, and perseverance in it to the end; and we do not undertake to explain how the two things are consistent with each other. When we read the very severe strictures of those great and good men, the Wesleys, against our belief on these points, and wonder that they could not have seen how scriptural and how profitable they are, we perceive something of the depths in the divine wisdom in allowing these mighty men some points of divergence from us, in order that they might become what they have been in England, and elsewhere, a great stimulant force in Christendom. They are, in some respects, the flying artillery in the sacramental host. What denomination can show greater exploits, more versatile service, and larger conquests? Let them differ from us, and go, like Nahum's chariots, through the west, and over the earth; we shall follow them, (where we do not precede them,) and by our diversified influence fill up that which is behind in them, for the elect's sake, which is the Church.

How good it is now to leave these things in which

evangelical Christians differ, and lift our eyes to heaven, as the Methodist Whitefield did in one of his sermons, when he appealed to Abraham by name to know whether he had any Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalian, or Congregationalists in heaven, and being answered, No, and asking, Whom have you there, the reply was, Christians.

We are not yet in heaven, however, but in a world where we all “see as through a glass darkly.” Therefore we must endeavor to serve God, and persuade men, by recommending that form of Christianity which appears to us, respectively, most accordant with scripture; at the same time remembering, that men as good and conscientious as we, who receive the one great essential truth of salvation by faith in Christ, feel persuaded that they also are substantially right in their modes and forms; and we know that God sets the seal of his blessing upon their labors. This should temper our sectarianism. Let us also be magnanimous and forbearing toward any who may assume that they alone, of all protestants, have the true church, and the true ministry, and the true forms of worship, and the sacraments in their purity and validity; and that all other denominations are schismatics, whose duty and safety require them to return at once into the one true fold.

There are maladies which lead some to reason themselves into the belief that they are kings, and queens,

or peers of the realm. The church of God is, in some sense, a hospital, in which we are all under treatment for our errors and follies. We can learn patience and toleration one toward another, as we see how sad is the delusion which makes some think that they only, of all the members of Christ's family, are sitting on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom. That sinful woman at the well of Samaria is a type of every prelatical church, which insists that in their mountain we must worship the father. The reproof and instruction which she received from Christ, some, who are, nevertheless, we doubt not, Christians, are slow to understand.

And who are Christians? Christians, according to an Apostolic definition, are "those who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." If a man wishes to know what he must do to be saved, and goes to a Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, or Congregationalist minister or Christian, they will each tell him, for substance, that which will lead him to pay divine honors to Jesus Christ. If he kneels in prayer with them, they will pray to Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Let him sing with them, and they will use hymns in accordance with that new song which is sung before the throne. This is what we believe to be meant by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours. It is rendering divine worship to Jesus Christ as the

Redeemer of men. In speaking upon this great theme, I choose to step upon that broad platform where I can stand side by side with those Episcopal, Baptist, and Methodist brethren, who, with all their discrepancies, adopt the language of Paul in the text. But even Paul made proper account of subordinate questions. When they came and asked him whether it was right to eat that which had been laid before an idol, and was then exposed for sale in the market, he did not reply, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," but he gave suitable answers to such inquiries.

It would be a cause of gratitude to God if we could say that evangelical Christians of different denominations do not contend for their forms of order and worship as their chief concern. Some, however, in all denominations, the Congregational not excepted, hold and urge extreme views, both as to doctrine and order. We may be as bigoted in insisting upon "no forms," as others are who insist upon their forms and order as essential to a standing in the Christian church, and in the Christian ministry. And as to the points of doctrine in which evangelical Christians differ, while we all have our strong preferences, and should not yield what we deem a principle, the dissent of confessedly good men, whom God accepts and honors, should make us charitable and liberal in our feelings, and prevent us from unnecessarily magnify-

ing the things in which we differ. For if there be in us one thing more than another which is offensive to our common Lord and Master, it must be a pretensions and lofty carriage toward other denominations of Christians whom, notwithstanding the signal manner in which God has owned and blessed them, we disfranchise, and then, with a due amount of admonition and warning, notify, that our doors stand open to receive them. Bold pretensions to the only divine patent right in religious ordinances have their effect upon a certain class of minds, and may lead them, by a sort of intimidation, to join another communion; but these men becoming, as they generally do, tenfold more intensely sectarian than those who may have been born in the sect, only help to make the denomination which they infest, Ishmaelitish toward the whole Israel of God.

As to certain doctrinal points on which true Christians differ, let us each be fully persuaded in his own mind and walk according to the light which we enjoy, but it was a shrewd stroke in the author of the *Paradise Lost*, to say that fallen angels, as one of their occupations, debated the subjects of

“ Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute;  
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.”

But a thorough training for the work of the ministry pre-supposes a knowledge of the constitution of the

human mind, with which we are to deal; and if one can popularize metaphysics in his preaching, and by his skilful use of moral science, make men feel that he is revealing their consciousness, he having, moreover, the higher qualification — that unction which the Holy Spirit alone imparts, he will, with the blessing of God, be eminently acceptable and useful. But if he makes the theological discrepancies of evangelical denominations needlessly prominent, and uses his acquisitions chiefly to illustrate and enforce his peculiar views, he needs to follow Paul out of the school of Gamaliel, into the school of that Savior whose love to men shed abroad in the heart is better than to “understand all mysteries and all knowledge,” and which alone keeps us from becoming “as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” As the Apostle gloried in his infirmities, let us, as Congregationalists, glory that we do not often incur the reproach of sectarianism in regard to our denominational order. Some among us feel that this is an infirmity, and that we ought to be aggressive, insist more on our anti-prelatical sentiments, and commend our denominational views more earnestly to the people. But Congregationalism consists so essentially in the absence of what we call human inventions, that it is difficult to make it aggressive. The only way in which we can be aggressive, is, to debate the scripturalness or expediency of the denominational tenets held by other sects. This we can do as

often as they are exalted so as to reflect, or to cast discredit, upon ourselves. If Christian brethren believe that different orders in the ministry and stated forms of worship are not forbidden in the Word of God, we rejoice in their liberty to use them; if they say that these things are enjoined, we still yield them the same liberty of conscience which we claim in maintaining the contrary; but, when they tell us that our ordinances are invalid, and our ministry unscriptural, they remind us of the house of bondage, where our fathers suffered under these same assumptions, and from which God brought them to this good land, and gave them institutions so free as to allow men full liberty of conscience and speech, even to the setting forth of such arrogant claims. May the time never come when we shall need to have open and general conflict with these natural enemies and invaders of Congregational liberty. We have heavy ordnance, and large equipments, as the history of non-conformity shows; but we prefer to see the vine trailing itself over the bastions, and, as in the windows of old castles, the olive tree and myrtles filling up the embrasures which look toward these aggressors. We pray for peace and charity between ourselves and other denominations, and we would not offensively obtrude our peculiarities. I gladly proceed to speak of the more important part of the subject assigned for this discourse, being willing that all should know the rela-

tive importance which we, as Congregationalists, attach to things which are essential, and to those which are not essential, to salvation.

Having disposed, therefore, of the denominational part of my theme, I proceed to speak of TRINITARIANISM, which is the other and more important part of the subject assigned to me.

I begin the doctrinal part of the discourse by saying, first of all, We have a Bible, which we regard and treat as a revelation from heaven. Here we have a fast anchorage ground. Not many years ago, one European nation and another, who had suffered under monarchical laws, cried out for a written constitution, and the battle cry was, "Written Constitution." Men feel safe only when they have such an instrument, ordained and published, as the exposition of their duties, defining the rights and powers of the government, and constituting the basis of judicial acts. We have such a written constitution. It is to us the Word of God. We do not select parts of it, and say that these are inspired, and the rest is of no authority. As we do not wish to speculate about the actions and words of Christ, whether this were divine, and this human, but take him as an undivided Christ and Savior, so we do not winnow the Bible, but take it altogether — just as we take Christ in another sense, — as the "Word" of God. We settle the question of its inspiration in this way. We take the Old Testament

Canon, for example, as it existed in the time of Christ, and we say, Jesus Christ came as a teacher of religion. The first thing which a teacher looks to, is the books which, as a teacher, he is to use. When and where did Jesus Christ speak one word of abrogation, emendation, or even criticism, with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures? No such word ever fell from his lips. On the contrary, he quoted them with approbation, and directed his hearers to search the Scriptures, saying, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." He did not seek to disabuse his hearers of their belief that eternal life was to be found in these Scriptures; nor did he point out parts of them which were of less authority than others, nor did he caution his hearers against a too implicit belief of the whole. "Think not," he said, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." He did not bestow qualified praise upon the Old Testament, as being venerable but somewhat antiquated, worthy of respect and love for what it had been, and still useful if judiciously consulted, but soon to be displaced by the New Testament; but, "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle," he declared, "should in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." As there are things in what is called "the law and the prophets," which, upon every interpretation, reach to the end of time, this proverbial expression of the Savior will be

literally fulfilled. The Apostle Peter who, on the mount of transfiguration, heard a voice from heaven attesting the Messiahship of Christ, and saw and heard the preternatural things which then and there transpired, tells us, that, in comparison even with such revelations, “we have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.— For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” So that we take the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, from the hands of Jesus Christ himself, as the Word of God.

As to the New Testament, if the Apostles were honest men, as we believe them to have been, this is all that we need to satisfy us of their inspiration; for they claim to be inspired, and they suffered and died in attestation of their claim. As to the amount of their inspiration, the Savior promised them that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth.

We, therefore, have a Bible which we receive as implicitly as if we, like Moses and the Prophets, should receive direct communications from heaven. We apply the same rules of interpretation to the Bible which we use in interpreting other writings, and having ascertained what is declared, we believe it, whether it be level to our comprehension, or infinitely beyond it

We do not make man and his powers of understanding, the standard and measure by which we decide what the nature of God should be ; we do not make our moral sentiments, nor our instincts, nor our relationships, a rule for the divine administration ; but we bring all our powers and faculties to the work of interpreting what the Bible teaches ; here we use our reason ; this is its province. Then, if the Bible teaches us that divine attributes, names, works, and worship, are ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, if all the usual proofs of distinct personal existence demonstrate the equal deity of Three, and if at the same time the Bible asserts, with equal clearness, that there is but one God, we believe these two truths—that there is one God, and that there is a threefold distinction in his nature.

Our predisposition as inquirers in common with all men, would lead us not to adopt this mystery respecting the Godhead, this inexplicable enigma, preferring naturally to receive things which lay the smallest tax on faith. But we remember the reply of the good bishop to the man who said that he had resolved not to believe anything which he could not understand. The bishop said, "Your creed, then, will be the shortest of any which I ever knew."

All the proofs which are usually adduced to show that Christ asserted his inferiority to the Father, confirm and illustrate our belief that the Savior, having

two distinct natures in one person, said things which could be true of only one nature. There is, in our view, as much, and the same, logical proof that Christ was not a man, as that he was not divine; and we might ask, Why not doubt and deny that he had a human nature, when we hear him say, "Before Abraham was, I am"? "And no man hath ascended up into heaven, but he which came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made," thus making him identical with Him who "in the beginning created the heavens and the earth," and who said, "Let there be light; and there was light." Instead of setting aside such proofs of Christ's deity, we might, with equal reason, say that Christ's human nature was a fiction, adopting something like the theory of the Docetæ, a sect to whom John refers in the first verses of his first epistle, and who derived their name from a Greek word, signifying *to seem*, or to appear, because they taught that Christ had only acted and suffered in appearance. We hold to the co-existence in Christ of two natures, without mixture or confusion, and therefore, necessarily, to a double consciousness; and we believe in his dependence and limited knowledge, as we do in his hunger and thirst, his weariness, his prayers, his sorrows, his friendships, his agony

of mind and body. The same lips uttered words dictated by these things, as well as those which proceeded from his remembrance of “the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.” If we are told that he may have been preëxistent, and yet not be divine, we say, “Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God.” The Most High, in his controversy with idolaters in the Old Testament, makes this the inecontrovertible proof of his Godhead, that he alone made the heavens and the earth;—“that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;”\* thus emphatically excluding the idea of delegated power in the work of creation. Moreover, this mysterious being declares that he is to sit as Judge with all the human race before him, and that he will separate them one from another, and pronounce the final sentence upon them.

It is a greater tax on our faith to believe that a creature does this, that a creature “made all things,” and that “by him do all things consist,” than that the “Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We can agree to consider this subject as but imperfectly revealed; but to say that the divine attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience can be delegated to a creature, is far more of a stumbling-block to us. This is not above reason, but contrary to reason; but when

\* Isaiah xliv. 24. Job ix. 8, etc.

the Bible asserts that “the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” this belongs to a region of truths far above us, and which we have never penetrated, viz: the mode of the divine existence.

If Christ made all things, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, if all things were created by him, or for him, he is our Maker. But our Maker is surely our God; and therefore we give divine worship to Christ.

But we find another still to whom divine attributes are attributed, viz., The Holy Ghost. The only sin which is unpardonable is blasphemy against Him. If He be merely divine influence, we do not know, and man cannot define, what the unpardonable sin is; therefore it cannot be committed; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. We are free to say that before we believed in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, we had no intelligible idea of the unpardonable sin. Now we can understand it. He is a person. He is a divine person. He is the great administrator in the kingdom of grace, applying the work of Christ to the hearts of men, having intercourse with them for this purpose. He who deliberately speaks words of contumely against this Sacred Person, sins against the last and most affecting effort of remedial mercy; and not only by the state of mind which led him to do it, has he placed himself beyond hope of recovery, but he falls under a judicial act of con-

demnation. To say that we may blaspheme the Father and the Son, and be forgiven, but if we blaspheme some influence of either of them, we cannot be forgiven, does greater violence to our understandings than to receive that which we deem the evidences of the personal existence and deity of the Holy Spirit.

That he is a person, we moreover learn from the Savior's words, in which he tells his disciples that if he himself should not go away, the Comforter would not come unto them. If the Holy Spirit is merely divine influence, how the Savior's being in the world should keep divine influence out of it, especially as Christ is the light of the world, we are at a loss to understand. But if the Holy Spirit be a divine person, having an equal share with Christ in the work of redemption, and having a special office assigned to him, viz., to convince and convert men, as the Savior's office was to suffer and die for sin, we can see why the Savior should depart and give place to him. But who is this that is capable of being a successor to Christ? Who can finish such a work as that which the Redeemer began? Who is it that is competent to move upon the heart of every human being, influence his will, and transform him into the image of God?

Baptism is administered in his name, equally with that of the Father and of the Son. We are not baptised in the name of God, and of the Messiah, and of divine influences; and the apostolic benediction is not so

expressed. When we read that “Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, into a mountain apart,” we do not hesitate to believe in three persons. We cannot believe that the great seal of the Christian religion, Baptism, and the Christian Benediction associate the name of a created being, and of an attribute, with the name of God. We hear the Holy Ghost speaking: “Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto *I* have appointed them.” He is represented as the author of the Jewish ritual: “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.” It is related as remarkable that certain of John’s disciples had not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. But they could not have been baptised by John and not have known that there was such a thing as “divine influence,” and therefore this could not have been all which was signified by the name, “Holy Ghost,” in that connection.

So we come to the conclusion that there are Three to whom divine attributes, names, works, and worship, are ascribed, and we are left to choose whether to believe that there are Three Gods, or that the One God exists with a three-fold distinction in his nature. For, to set aside all the plain proofs that supreme deity is ascribed to Three, on the ground that we dread the inference which must follow, is to make ourselves like the cotemporaries of Galileo who would not look through his telescope, lest their discoveries should con-

found their theories. Believing that there is but One God, we adopt the belief forced upon us by our interpretation of Scripture, that the One God has a plural nature. We believe in the Divine Unity, in opposition to the belief that there are more Gods than one; so that "the doctrine of the Trinity" is a form of stating the collected facts concerning the mode of the divine existence.

But "the word Trinity is not in the Bible," and it has been said, "If the very words which are necessary to express the doctrine are not in the scriptures, how can we suppose the doctrine itself to be there?"

The expressions, "Omniscience," "Unity of God," "Sacrament," and many other conventional terms are not in the Bible. The word, Trinity, is no more necessary to the doctrine itself than the expression, "communion of saints", is necessary to the existence of Christian fellowship. These terms prevent circumlocution, and are merely convenient.

"But Christ said, 'My Father is greater than I.' " None but a being who, in some sense, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," would be so presumptuous as thus to make a comparison of himself with the Most High. Imagine Moses saying to the children of Israel as he came down from the mount, or even Gabriel saying to Mary, "My Father is greater than I." We can free ourselves from the feeling that there is assumption in those words of Jesus, or that

He forgot himself, or was unduly elated, or used an expression which, though seemingly in deprecation of too great reverence for himself, was really irreverent, only by believing that his disciples were liable to forget, amidst the impressions which his power and love had made on their hearts, that he was acting in a subordinate capacity, and that they needed to feel that their Savior's personal presence was not the greatest and best thing for them ; that the Father was engaged in the work of redemption and acted as its head, and that the Holy Spirit also must come and do his part of the divine work. By such an interpretation alone can we see even a common reverence for God, and an ordinary sense of propriety, (with submission be it spoken,) in the words, " My Father is greater than I." Acting, even in His complex nature, in a subordinate capacity, the words are natural and appropriate ; but if he were a mere man, no wonder that some call him fallible, if he could for one moment have compared himself with the Infinite One.

We read, " No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father ; and no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Now as we do know in some sense of the term, and according to the measure of the human understanding, who God is, so we may know many things which are revealed concerning Christ ; but, we learn from this passage that there are mysteries in

Christ's nature which are not fathomed, except by the Father; they are compared to the mysteries in the nature of the Father. Equally astonishing, Christ represents himself as alone capable of knowing the Father.

Such is the mystery, concerning which Paul prayed for "as many as had not seen his face in the flesh," "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

It is interesting to know that those denominations who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible as a revelation from God, find in it the doctrine of a threefold personal distinction in the Godhead. And those denominations who reject the plenary inspiration of the Bible, do not find that doctrine there. I mention this as a coincidence worthy of notice. The two things, plenary inspiration of the Word of God, and the Deity of Christ, usually stand or fall together.

There are some practical views of this subject which will be considered in their place. I proceed now to speak of Future Retribution.

We bow implicitly to the disclosures of the Bible, as we find that the punishment of the wicked is to be without end. We cannot tell, of ourselves, what sin deserves. We listen, implicitly, to the revelation of the Most High on that subject. We believe in endless future punishment, not because of natural timidi-

ty, or superstitious fear, nor because our teachers so instruct us. We have an average share of intelligence and cultivation, are no better and no worse than our neighbors. We are as capable by nature of defying the Almighty, we are as bold to offend him, and to rush on the thick bosses of his buckler, as other sinners. Some think that we must have direful views of God to believe in endless future punishment, that he must seem to us a tyrant, a "Draco, whose laws were written with blood", whereas to them God appears merciful and benign. But the infinite love of God is one of the strongest considerations in our minds with regard to future punishment; for to us that love finds its highest manifestation in the gift of a Savior, to make propitiation for our sins. In our ransom we see our ruin. The love of Christ, leading to his sufferings and death for sin, do more than anything else to persuade us that the wages of sin is death; that there is a loss of the soul which nothing can prevent but the sacrifice on Calvary. That such a sacrifice should be made, by the incarnation and the expiatory offering of the Word who was with God and was God, that the Holy Spirit should come to apply it in the hearts of men, a ministry of reconciliation be appointed, whose great commission is to say, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God;" and then that men having rejected, or, which is equivalent, having

neglected, this Savior, should go to be chastised and disciplined out of their sins, and that, too, notwithstanding all our sufferings, mingled with mercy, here, and all the warnings and threatenings of the Bible, and thus reach heaven by their own sufferings, is to make the love of God a failure, and punishment to be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. That the great propitiation for sin should thus come to nought, and prison discipline prove the grand instrument of salvation, excites the question why this should not have been resorted to at first, as the most natural, and certainly as, in the view of some it will prove, the most effectual way of reformation. That the infinite love of God will thus be made superfluous, and that any of our race will reach heaven through the discipline of hell, to reflect on its enormous woes as the means of their deliverance, making the cross of Christ of none effect, is as contrary to our apprehension of what is suitable and reasonable as it is to the word of God. So that if any come to us and say, "God is love, and therefore he will not punish forever," we say, "Herein is love," pointing them to the cross; we take our place there, and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men. Our friends who differ from us think that a belief in the eternity of future punishment must make us unhappy. They forget that the idea of future punishment is associated in our minds with redemption from it, that salvation is the burden

of our preaching, that we go to the vilest of men, following even the felon to the scaffold, and thus to the last hour of every sinner's life we say, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him."

As to the heathen, we shall either find them in heaven, or be satisfied with the reason why they are not there. In the meantime, we are obeying the last command of the ascending Savior with the reason annexed, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

We find in the Bible, therefore, that every one who fails to accept pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God, will have no probation after death. The Son of God, the Word made flesh, under the name of Jesus, offers up himself, the presence of the divine nature in his person giving infinite worth and efficacy to his sacrifice. This is an atonement for sin, stated in this most simple way: "Christ died for us;" "to give his life a ransom for many;" "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" "he died for all;" "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and other expressions in great number and variety. The death of Christ is proposed to men as the ground on which God can be just, and justify

him that believeth in Jesus. Repentance and the remission of sins are to be preached in his name among all nations. We do not understand why an atonement like this was made, rather than any other; we find it set forth, and urged upon us, as that alone which delivers us from the wrath to come. And we cannot see why it is unjust, or cruel, that we, for whom such infinite condescension and such a sacrifice took place, should, upon refusing to accept it, suffer such consequences as God in his wisdom shall appoint. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

There is far more prominence given to love than to fear in our system of faith. Its great central truth is, love to the guilty. But he has no experience or observation who does not know that in every form of government, private or public, fear is an important and indispensable element; it has its place; that place is not in precedence of everything else, for then we infer despotism in the government. But God appeals to the principle of fear in governing us, and fear quickens love and obedience even in the purest relations of life. The great inducements to faith in Christ which God himself presents, are addressed to our love of happiness and to our fears of misery, and he who proposes to leave out fear in religion is as unscriptural as he is forgetful of our natural instincts.

While the love of God, in the gift of a Savior, sheds its light and glory over the whole system of revealed truth, we believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also the God of the Old Testament, with all that is there related of him as vindictive and implacable toward the incorrigibly wicked. There has been no change in the divine character since the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the extirpation of the Cananites. "Our God is a consuming fire." "It is" still "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The Savior, himself, is all which the Old Testament represents God to be, in his final treatment of wicked men. "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We believe that no language can describe, no mind can conceive the punishment which sin deserves, and which awaits us if we reject the Gospel, and refuse to repent. Some of President Edwards' well-known sermons express our general views upon this subject; but neither they, nor any other descriptions, do justice to the dread reality. To one who was finding fault with the terrible language in some of Richard Baxter's works on this theme, a good man said, "One word of damnation from the lips of Christ is more than a thousand of Mr. Baxter's." We believe that

God will punish sin in a way corresponding to the infinite wonders of his love and grace in redemption; and that as there are said to be depths in the ocean corresponding to the height of mountains, so they who neglect Christ and continue in sin, will endure a punishment corresponding to the greatness of the salvation which was provided for them. We believe that the justice of God will be as clearly and fully illustrated as his love, and that the two will lay a foundation for the confidence and joy of the holy universe, in whose government the endless punishment of sin will hold an important place. Let it be fully understood, that our belief in the future, endless punishment of all who reject salvation by Christ is one important element in our love and gratitude to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for the stupendous work of redemption, and that it is the occasion of love and zeal, which should be more by a hundred fold, for the souls of our fellow men.

We find that the Bible has, in all ages of the world, made certain impressions on the vast majority of its readers; the cultivated, the gentle, the humane, the benevolent, the learned as well as the unlearned; and we are accustomed to suppose that if God has given a revelation to man, its meaning would lie on its surface, as we find is the case in all written communications which are intended to be understood; so that the sense which is generally received from age to age

by common readers of the Bible, is and must be true. Now we perceive that mankind at large, who receive the Bible implicitly as the word of God, find there that God will punish the incorrigibly wicked without end. We say, Who invented this terrible truth ? It is not agreeable to our natural feelings. Our reason would not have suggested it. Were it a palpable error, time, which has reformed many errors and exploded others, surely would have consigned this long ago to the moles and the bats, if it had no foundation in the Bible. Yet there were never so many who believed it as at the present day ; and we are therefore confirmed in the belief derived from the impressions which the Bible makes upon us, that there is no forgiveness after death. These things I mention chiefly to illustrate the manner in which evangelical Christians of all denominations receive and interpret the word of God. The mode of the divine existence, and the future eternal punishment of the wicked, are two things which make large demands on faith. We, therefore, believe, without comprehending the subjects of our faith, in these two mysteries, as we all do with regard to the union of soul and body, the final resurrection, and the ultimate truths in the various departments of nature.

If one says here, How can three be one and one three ? we say, that God cannot, of course, be three in the same sense in which he is one, nor is he one in the

same sense in which he is three. But we are not so presumptuous as to sit as teachers to our fellow mortals, with regard to that of which, like them, we know nothing. The only source from which we can derive knowledge concerning God, is equally in their possession as in ours; and while we disclaim any superiority to them, they may not properly reproach us with believing absurdities, or cleaving to exploded errors. There are immeasurably less difficulties with us in believing that Christ and the Holy Spirit are divine, than in the opposite theory; and believing in their divinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is the only relief from believing in three Gods. If it be replied, that this is impossible in the nature of things, we might be satisfied to make the reply which our late distinguished statesman and fellow citizen made to a friend who met him at the door of an Episcopal church, and rallied him on worshiping at a place where the doctrine of three in one was inculcated. The reply was, "Neither you nor I understand the arithmetic of heaven."\*

\* Having used this anecdote after much hesitation, and apprehending that it might seem like resorting to a great name among men for support to divine truth, I find it necessary, for certain reasons, to go farther, and add the following; — which, however, I still would not do, if the point were merely the assent of any distinguished man to a controverted doctrine of the Bible.

Since this sermon was preached, I have obtained authentic information respecting this anecdote. A distinguished clergyman writes to me, in answer to my inquiry, as follows: —

The greatest intellect is as infantile in its capacity to understand the “great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,” as a child, and therefore the mystery owes no man any obligation for acceding to it; nor can great names confirm or impeach it. I quote this remark, therefore, only to say, in accordance with it, that it becomes us not to pronounce confidently as to the impossibility of there being a three-fold distinction in the one God. But I will endeavor soon to commend the subject to your approbation, and not leave it as a cold and barren abstraction.

We are inquired of whether a man would punish his child forever, and whether the human mind does not revolt from the idea of endless misery, and whether we have read the Evangelical Baptist John Foster’s objections to Endless Punishment. We had read the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew before we read Mr. Foster’s views, and we have read that chapter since, with other passages of the Savior’s discourses which relate to future retributions. We feel ourselves to be the persons to whom, in common with our fellow sin-

“Dining with Mr. Webster two months before his death, I remarked to him that I had been informed of an event which I wished him to contradict, modify, or confirm. The statement was, that a gentleman met him one day as he was coming out of an Episcopal church, and accosted him thus: ‘Then you attend that church?’ ‘Sometimes.’ ‘So you believe that three and one are the same thing?’ ‘I believe, Sir,’ said Mr. Webster, ‘that neither you nor I understand the arithmetic of heaven.’ — ‘You have it,’ said Mr. Webster [to my informant,] ‘as it occurred.’”

ners, these warnings of future endless retribution are addressed ; and we more than question the propriety of our sitting in judgment on the penalties threatened against our transgressions. The eternity of future punishment is no more agreeable and no more intelligible to us than to others. But we prefer that God should be law-giver and judge, remembering that transgressors, when they suffer the penalty of their sins, are apt to feel that it violates their sense of propriety, and goes against many of their instinctive feelings ; for they feel sure that they never would treat a child as the law treats them. We find that a parent may do things in his government and discipline which the teacher of a school cannot safely adopt ; that the teacher of a school can act on some principles which are not practicable in the government of a man-of-war, an army, a city, or a nation ; in a word, that as the sphere of authority widens, analogies sought between one and another of them, fail. We forbear, therefore, to make our moral sentiments the source of information concerning God and his government, but we would rather bring them to the word of God for correction and instruction, accepting the great Protestant maxim that the Scriptures are the only and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. So long, therefore, as we receive the Bible as an authoritative standard of truth, we are compelled to receive the doctrine of future endless retribution, as the vast majority of devout persons have received it in all ages of the world.

Injustice would be done to the system of Evangelical belief, if I should rest here, and leave the impression that our faith is a heartless assent to an all-constraining power, requiring blind submission to its disclosures. While some of the principal doctrines of our faith are above reason, I shall be happy to show that not only are they not against reason, but being accepted as matters of pure revelation, they commend themselves to our consciences and hearts. This system stimulates and develops the powers of the human mind, and brings forth all the best affections of the human soul.

Our religion does not begin with requiring us to believe that three can be one and one three, or that a part of mankind will suffer without end for their sins. The way in which we have generally arrived at a full and settled persuasion concerning our doctrine is, by a discovery of the infinite love of God to us in the way of salvation, so that we are led to say with the Apostle John, "And we have known and believed the love which God hath toward us." The love of God is the sun in our system of truth. If others rejoice in God as their heavenly father, and celebrate his love as the great theme of religion, we have proofs and illustrations of that love which make our praises surpass theirs. It reminds us of the Oratorio of the Messiah compared with Pope's Universal Prayer. Our great theme is, "For God so loved the world that he gave

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We do not teach, do not believe, that God was implacable towards us, and that the Son of God interposed and prevailed upon him to accept Him as a substitute for us; but, on the contrary, that redemption began with the Father as well as with the Son; that it was a plan of infinite mercy to save sinners, and not an agreement to be appeased and satisfied. Our hymn writers and orators dramatize the work of redemption, and say many things with a poetic license in a fervent state of mind, which an ordinary degree of literary discernment and candor, nevertheless, finds it easy to distinguish from a strictly accurate theological statement.

An individual is made to feel that all is not right between himself and God. It is not so much that he dreads future punishment, though he has good warrant, both in reason and in Scripture, for being moved with fear to prepare an ark, to the saving of his house; but he is dissatisfied with himself; he wishes to have a sense of reconciliation and peace with God.

He goes to an evangelical minister and tells him his tale of sorrow. Among other things, he says, "I was educated in an entire unbelief of your faith; was always taught that 'the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible'; that repentance is sufficient for

salvation ; but I am not satisfied. What must I do to be saved ? ”

No one who has himself experienced the power of religion, would begin by teaching this enquirer the doctrine of the Trinity. He would rather direct him to dismiss his troubled thoughts about that mystery, and he would say to him, My friend, you need that which God has appointed for you, namely, some other righteousness than your own, as the ground of pardon and acceptance with God. You are a sinner, and are under condemnation for your sins ; by nature a child of wrath, even as others. But God has so loved you, even in your rebellion and ill desert, as to give the Savior to be, by his sufferings and death, a substitute for your punishment. He becomes your righteousness, or, the ground and reason of your deliverance from condemnation. The only condition required of you is, that you believe with your heart, and accept, this offered way of being pardoned and reconciled to God. Consider such words as these : Christ “ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.” “ He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.” Then the way to avail yourself of this righteousness is declared in such words as these : “ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through

our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." You need, first of all, to be forgiven; you must apply for pardon to Him who can be just and justify him that believeth in Jesus; not him that merely repenteth—but "him that believeth in Jesus." The inquirer, then, believes that the way which God has ordained for sinners to be reconciled to him is through the sufferings and death of the Savior, constituting an equivalent for the punishment of the sins of the whole world. All that the Bible says about the Savior's death, his blood, his cross, all the types in the sacrifices, and the names of Christ fulfilling them, "Lamb of God," "High Priest," "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," satisfy him that the atoning death of Christ is the appointed ground of acceptance with God. He then sees, more than ever, what a sinner he is, and how great the enormity of sin must be to have required such a sacrifice; and the love of God toward him, and the thought of Christ as dying for him, fills him with true sorrow for his sins such as he never felt before; for repentance is the sorrow of love; we never repent toward any one till some feeling of interest in him or love toward him, touches the heart. Nothing has this effect compared with the thought of Christ dying for our sins. Now the inquirer accepts Christ as he finds him to be offered

in the gospel, and doing so there takes place in him at the time, that change, by the Holy Spirit, of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus, when he said, " Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." But his act of believing was itself the work of the Holy Spirit; " for by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God." This change is that regeneration by which we have spiritual perceptions, and feelings, and tastes ; and he that experiences it, we say, will certainly persevere to the end and be saved. " Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ." It is that part of redemption which the Holy Spirit performs in our souls as a consequence of the atonement by Christ ; " in whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." In our mental philosophy, in the whole range of human experience, we never find anything to be compared with the knowledge of ourselves, the self control, the disclosure of new objects of spiritual affection and pursuit, the inward peace and satisfaction, which flow from this change which is connected with the one act of saving faith in the Redeemer. " If any man be in Christ he is a new creature ; old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new."

A friend who cannot understand how three can be one

and one three, knowing that this new convert formerly had great perplexity on that subject, now inquires of him how he has settled that problem. I have not settled it, he says. All that I know is, that I have seen myself to be a lost, perishing sinner, in need of other righteousness than my own. I have found in Christ Jesus an Almighty Savior. I worship him, I have committed my soul to him; and yet I can no more understand the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, than I could before. I take the revealed facts concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and I believe them, and am willing to believe concerning the unsearchable God anything which he is pleased to reveal; and I do not perplex myself with attempts at explanation.

But one inquires whether we may not trust in the Savior's sufferings and death for sin, and still not believe in his supreme deity. May not God have appointed his sufferings for our redemption, even if he be only a super-angelic being?

It has seemed to us that we have sometimes met those who thus received Christ as a Savior, and who, while they could not, or, on account of their religious instruction, had not received Christ in his divine nature, nevertheless relied upon his mediation, and prayed to him. All this, it is easy to see, is theologically inconsistent, for it is rendering worship to a crea-

ture. To say that saving faith may not be found in connection with such inadvertency and imperfect knowledge, would be to limit the grace of the Holy Spirit, and we might thereby break some bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. But exceptional cases form no rule of duty; we, who are capable of understanding how impossible, in the nature of things, it is, for a creature to atone for sin, must, if we accept that atonement, refer it to a divine nature in Christ giving infinite worth and efficacy to his sufferings and death.

We would affectionately say to those who are greatly troubled by the doctrine of the Trinity, and who aver, with the utmost sincerity, that they would believe it if satisfied that the Bible disclosed it,—that we seldom, if ever, find that any arrive at a belief in it by speculating about it, by reading books on the subject, by discussions with their friends, or through religious controversies. The doctrine of the Trinity is, by itself, of no practical value, any more than it is to know whether there be six, or seven stars in the Pleiades. The doctrine of the Trinity is important only as systematizing for us the previously ascertained truths of the Supreme Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is a conclusion, resulting from things which are gathered independently of any theory.

Some wonder why the doctrine should seem so mysterious, and even absurd, to them, when so many

whom they respect and love, believe it. An able writer undertakes to explain why the Epistle to the Romans is usually regarded as very difficult. His explanation is applicable to our subject. He says, "Where there is wanting, in the reader's own life, an experience analogous to that of the Apostle, it is utterly unintelligible."\* We must feel our personal need of that which led to the disclosure of the mystery in the Godhead, that is to say, the Redemption which is by Christ; then we receive the mystery. Abundant illustrations of this are to be found among us in those who once rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, but who are now members of our Evangelical churches.

The way, therefore, to arrive at a belief in the Trinity is, not by direct efforts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory propositions which it involves, but, to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" to comply with the directions of the Bible, which point to the sufferings and death of Christ as the only way of salvation; and thus, having received the pardon of sin through his blood, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we come to believe in the deity of Christ, and of the Spirit; and that which we call the Doctrine of the Trinity supervenes in our belief as a necessary consequence, and as the only way of escaping from the belief that there are more Gods than one.

\* Olshausen's Commentary on the New Testament, III., 463.

The theory of our evangelical faith, all must admit, is most sublime. Every one who considers it abstractly, if he be impartial, must say, There is at least one thing in it which it is most desirable should be true. The human mind, from the beginning, has been craving visible manifestations of the Godhead, something to satisfy it that God, a Spirit, is near to us, interested in human affairs, and also to know his feelings and wishes with regard to us. Hence, the various theories of incarnation, and all the numberless forms of idolatry, showing the desire in the human mind for the manifestation of God. Now, if God so exists, that in one of the mysterious distinctions of his essential being he will take man's nature into union with his own, being born of a woman, and passing through all the conditions of human life, then make expiation for our sins, and become our Redeemer and Savior,— who will not say, Could this be possible, what more is there to be desired? Now, this is our faith. The Word made flesh lies in the manger at Bethlehem, passes through all the stages of human life, bears our griefs, and carries our sorrows, is tempted in all points as we are, enters into all our feelings, is our forerunner through all the dark passages of life, while we know that “he is before all things and by him do all things consist,” that “all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that is made.” I can call him my elder brother, and in the

next breath my God ; now tell the man of sorrows my trouble, and, in a moment after, pray him, as my final Judge, to be my advocate at the world's last session. Angels, authorities and powers are subject unto him, who nevertheless says to every child of man, "Behold I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him and he with me." Though He will come at the end of the world with all his holy angels, he says of every believer, " And I will raise him up at the last day." The believer says of him, " Who loved me and gave himself for me." " For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

We also pray to the Holy Spirit, in whose name we were baptized, by whom we were convinced of sin and led to Christ, and whose relation to us is specially set forth by the terms, "communion" and "fellowship." We prefer particular wants to Him, ask special blessings of Him, receive spiritual mercies from Him ; in short, he is to us, as the Savior promised, "the Comforter," who is to abide with us forever. And while the Son and the Holy Spirit thus occupy most endeared relations to us, the Father becomes not merely Deity, but as his own peculiar name indicates, our Father ; a name which, in such a world as this, has the more particular significance and sweetness as ex-

pressing a relationship to us,—not merely that of God, but of Father,—as the Savior and the Comforter each have their relations to us in the work of redemption.

One word of explanation may be useful here as a relief to inquiring minds. We find that the Father is uniformly called God. We suppose that it is the divine arrangement in the work of human redemption that the idea and the name of God shall prominently associate themselves in the minds of men, with the Father, as distinguished from the Son, and the Holy Spirit,—these holding subordinate offices in the great plan. Thus associating the idea and name of God specially with the Father, we are saved the necessity of trying to combine the Three in our thoughts, so as to make them One to our conceptions. We therefore unhesitatingly address the Father as *God*, He being ordinarily so designated in the New Testament. And yet we remember that there is One who “was in the beginning with God, and was God,” and One also who is connected with them both in acts of divine worship; and, moreover, that the word *Father* is often used to interpret the word *God*, in cases where it would be utterly superfluous, if the Father alone were divine.

There is no system which gives us such views of the dignity of human nature as our evangelical system. It represents human nature as capable of union with the divine nature, in the person of Jesus Christ. Our na-

ture can think, speak, act, and exist through eternity, in personal union with the "Word who was God." What dignity is there in any view of man, to be compared with this? It holds out to every human being the boundless career of glory which is before our nature, if we are saved, seeing that it is capable of being possessed forever by One "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Surely, if, as some say, it costs us painful efforts, (as it does not when convinced of our guilt and our need of a divine Savior,) to believe in the supreme deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and so in a Trinity, we are recompensed when we see our nature in such personal, nay, bodily union with the Divine Word. It opens to the heart of the believer such views of his relation to his God, draws him into such union and communion with Him, and so persuades him, as nothing else can, of identification with his divine Redeemer, that the whole circle of natural and revealed truth furnishes no such sources of pleasure. So that no system is to be compared, as a source of happiness, too, with that which makes Jesus Christ the object of divine worship and supreme love. Witness the hymns which it has produced, surpassing all other lyrics in rapturous thoughts and expressions. The Congregational Watts has to-day filled many temples of God, wherever the English language is spoken, with his glowing strains. Notice how his hymns begin:

“ Behold the glories of the Lamb  
 Amidst his father’s throne ;  
 Prepare new honors for his name,  
 And songs before unknown.

Thou hast redeemed our souls with blood,  
 Hast set the prisoners free ;  
 Hast made us kings and priests to God,  
 And we shall reign with thee.”

The Methodist, Charles Wesley, almost his rival, cries :

“ He left his father’s throne above,  
 So free, so infinite his grace ;  
 Emptied himself of all but love,  
 And bled for Adam’s helpless race.  
 ’Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
 For, O my God, it found out me.”

The Baptist Bunyan comes singing through the world, in every language, to every pilgrim heavenward ; and, without telling us how he was baptized, or how we must be, lifts up his voice, and sings :

“ Blest Cross ! blest Sepulchre ! blest, rather be  
 The Man who there was put to shame for me.”

And the Episcopal Heber leads great Missionary assemblies everywhere, as they sing :

“ Waft, waft ye winds his story, —  
 Till o’er our ransomed nature  
 The Lamb for sinners slain,  
 Redeemer, King, Creator  
 Returns in bliss to reign.”

Nothing, therefore, is further from the truth than to call evangelical religion “a gloomy system.” On the contrary, to all who enter into the full spirit of the system, it is a perfect rapture. Sin and death are gloomy; redemption from them is not so. If we believe all which the Bible and our own consciousness and observation teach us respecting the entire natural alienation of man from God, and his need of divine help, we are not justly chargeable with “gloomy views” for discerning and promulgating the truths relating to human nature and redemption. A man who should tell newly-discovered islanders, when foreign people begin to visit their shores, of the disease called the small pox, and, setting forth its horrors, should urge vaccination, might perhaps be charged by some with taking “gloomy views” of human life; but with how much reason?

Not only does our faith lead us, with our fellow citizens generally, to bless the poor and afflicted at home; — it makes the world of mankind, for which Christ died, to be our neighbors; — and having a gospel which is for the barbarian as well as for the Jew, for the wise and the unwise, we seek to fulfil the last command of Christ, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” This was the original character of the gospel — it was essentially a self-propagating system; and we may be sure, therefore, that they who have the true gospel will

spread it to the ends of the earth. It is this system which has made the barbarous Sandwich Islanders an independent nation, converted South Sea cannibals and Greenlanders, the Burmese, and Hottentots ; and has sent to heaven representatives from every nation and tongue, as fruits of its love and zeal.

As an illustration of the way in which our belief in the Divine Redeemer helps the human mind in its thoughts and feelings about the Deity, I will speak of one who was distressed at the thought of an eternal, self-existent God ; — and who, at times, is not visited with such thoughts ? “ How came He ? ” said the inquirer. “ What made it possible for Him to be ? Everything else had a beginning ; how could He exist always, with no origin, no cause ? ” Then he would reprove himself for irreverence or presumption ; still these thoughts would return. One day, having been much troubled on the subject, he said to himself, “ I am sure of one thing, and that is, that Jesus Christ is what the New Testament describes. I believe in his preëxistence, his birth, his miracles, his omnipresence, his omnipotency ; that he redeemed me and will save me. The Bible tells me, ‘ All things were made by him.’ He who made me is my God. Whoever else may be God, he is God to me ; and I will worship him as my God, and let go all my troubled thoughts about the infinite and eternal Deity.” So he believed in the

Divine Savior, and prayed to him, and committed the keeping of his soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, till at last his mind was perfectly at rest ; and whenever the thought of the past eternity of God began to oppress him, he fled to the manger at Bethlehem, and to Bethany, and to Gethsemane, and to Calvary, and Olivet, saying to his Savior :

“ Rock of Ages ! cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee.”

This is one practical illustration of the design in the great mystery of godliness — God manifest in the flesh. It is as when a vine-dresser adds a lower rail to the trellis, and helps the young tendrils as they reach after something to sustain them. The Father will not be jealous if we thus receive Christ as Him “in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Other men besides this friend of whom I speak, have similar experiences with regard to the incomprehensible Deity. Dr. Watts tells us,

“ Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.”

And when he looks within the vail, he says, and Christians of every name on earth respond,

“ There I behold with sweet delight,  
The Sacred Three in One ;  
And strong affections fix my sight,  
On God’s incarnate Son.”

One great and good object will be effected by the present course of lectures, if it be established in our minds that the Evangelical sects do not differ as to the truths which are essential to salvation. On that subject they are a unit. But we are all weak and sinful, and we sometimes unduly magnify our party distinctions, and lose sight of that great salvation which is independent of forms and names. We also are tempted to engage in speculations. We speculate, even, about the nature of the atonement, and other things, when we should all do better to preach and teach the simple truths of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and the necessity of the new birth, and warn men of their danger as sinners, and point them to Christ. We need to ask pardon of God and our fellow men, that sectarian zeal should ever chill our love to one another, and prevent us from exalting the things in which we agree, and keeping those things in which we differ in their proper place. We trust that the present effort will lead us all to determine afresh not to know anything but Christ and him crucified; and in our endeavors to set forth the peculiarities of our respective systems, to do it with Christian love and charity, abstaining from everything like sarcasm, and ridicule, or reflecting upon the understanding or the motives of others, but seeking to convince and persuade each other, if we may; but, above all things,

combining to make Christ and his salvation the Alpha and the Omega of our ministrations.

There are some who have not yet united themselves to any evangelical denomination, who, nevertheless, may secretly have embraced the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Instead of saying, "Forbid them, because they follow not with us," we say, in the words of Jesus, "Forbid them not, for he that is not against us is on our part." We shall none of us be saved or lost, merely for belonging, or not belonging, to any particular denomination. But this is true, that no one can experimentally accept the truths of the Savior's supreme deity, and of his sacrifice for sin, and yet leave the Christian community long in doubt where he stands. To worship Christ as God, and to believe in deliverance from sin and eternal misery through Him, so affects the mind that, like the Apostles, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. "And being let go, they went to their own company." This is a law of our nature. We associate with those of our own kind; in politics we may belong to no party, but in religion we show the state of our hearts quickly by our religious associations. Jesus Christ has a definite character. He is one thing or another. He is deity, or he is a creature, between whom, if he be a creature, however exalted, and deity, there is an infinite distance. If one would fly ninety-six mil-

lions of miles to the sun, it would make but little difference whether he started from the plain or from the Himalaya Mountains. The difference between the most exalted creature and God is as really infinite as between us and God. The most exalted creature is only a creature. Some who are disposed to walk after the evangelical faith, stumble at the great stumbling block of Christ crucified. They find it hard to place the Savior on the throne, but prefer to leave him very far up in the regions of uncertainty. For such friends we sometimes think that the New Testament ends with that passage concerning Christ, in the first chapter of the Acts, "And a cloud received him out of their sight."

The Apostles were not mystics; they left no man in doubt as to their opinions concerning Christ; the churches had no occasion to debate whether one and another of them was sound as to his views of Him for whom they had suffered the loss of all things. It was not the Apostles' doctrine that there are many ways to heaven, as there are many railroads leading to a great city from opposite points, but all terminating in the same city. They insisted that there was but one way to be saved.

There is, therefore, a test of truth which we can easily remember and apply in hearing the preachers of different denominations, and in deciding whom to believe.

While it does not follow that every system declaring a belief in itself to be essential to salvation, is, for that reason, the truth of God, we find this to be true, that Christ and the apostles declared that a belief in the gospel was necessary in order to be saved. Hence we conclude, that if a man professes to preach the gospel to us, and does not insist that there is something in his system which we must believe, or perish, he does not preach Christ's gospel. If he says, All systems have some good in them and you must cull for yourself, only be sincere;

“For forms of faith, let senseless zealots fight,  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right;”

and it is bigotry for me to say that you must believe this which I preach to you, or perish;—if he speaks thus, all men, even the worst, are straightway warranted in saying to him, as the evil spirits, in Paul's time, had the discernment to say to certain false teachers, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?” We require him to say to us, if he professes to preach the gospel, There are things in my system which you may receive or reject, and though I consider them to be scriptural, and good, and profitable unto men, you may innocently follow me, or my neighbor, who differs from me in these things. There are, nevertheless, some things in my system which you must believe; and I have no authority to say that you will be saved

unless you do. My everlasting all I venture upon the truth of these things. I must believe these things or perish. I believe that you must do the same. A man who says this has one essential proof that he preaches Christ's gospel. For this is what Christ did, and the apostles. We therefore try men who preach to us, by this rule. If you insist that you have a gospel which is essential to salvation, we will listen to it; but if it be not essential to salvation whether we believe you or those who in every thing differ from you, the gospel which you preach is another gospel, and the charitable Paul — he who wrote those remarkable words to the Corinthian Christians on charity, tells us, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In the next words he repeats the same imprecation, to show that he speaks with deliberation: "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."\* There are some things, therefore, about which no man can properly be what is called "liberal"; he must be strict, he must be exclusive, in matters of life and death. A physician or surgeon can be liberal in everything but in his opinion of the disease or fracture; there he must be decided; but if he stands over us and, with an

\* Galatians, i: 8, 9.

amiable face, hopes that all will be well, and declines to act with decision, and vigorously, lest it should seem like professional bigotry, he is an object of abhorrence. The lukewarm Laodiceans teach us what feelings indecision in religion excite in the mind of Christ. Therefore we say to those who preach to us, You must warn us that we must believe the gospel as you preach it, or we must perish. Apply it, if you will, to your "infant baptism," or your "immersion," or your "perfectability," or your "apostolical succession," and tell us that "he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Bring yourself and your gospel to that test. You will not, you cannot, erect non-essentials into a condition of salvation, if you are like Christ and the apostles. But, if you have nothing in your system which you are able thus to insist upon as essential to salvation, and if, notwithstanding, you profess to be a minister of Jesus, you are ashamed of the gospel, and we have reason to be ashamed of you, and we fear that Christ will be ashamed of you before his Father and before his angels.

Whatever others may believe, and whatever else may be true, Evangelical Christians, if they truly follow their belief, are safe. If there be no atonement for sin, they are safe. If there be no retributions after death, they are safe.

But suppose that there is only one way in which we

are forgiven and saved; suppose that the consequences of unpardonable sin are banishment from God, and that there is no probation after death. We have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. And now we do not turn and say to our fellow men, You must believe as we do because we thus believe, or you cannot be saved. But we do say, We do not expect to be saved but in this way. And it is not unkind in us, either in temporal or eternal things, to desire that our fellow men should be partakers of that on which our hopes depend.

Another thing which confirms us in our confident attachment to the evangelical system is, that we never heard of its being renounced on a dying bed. We have personal knowledge of instances in which every other system has been abjured in the last hours of life, for the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an unheard of thing for a dying person to say, I used to believe in the Savior's sufferings and death as the ground of pardon and acceptance with God. But now that I am dying, such a Savior is not the Savior which I need. This we never hear. But the ministers of every evangelical persuasion testify to cases in which dying persons have fled for refuge to the atoning Savior. Men are exceedingly apt to call on Christ in their extremity. Sea captains have spoken of this. David Hume played cards a short

time before he died, having been fixed in his chair for the purpose, with the determination of meeting death "like a philosopher." But as the cold shadows of the valley fell upon him, he needed a rod and staff to comfort him, and he cried, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me, Jesus Christ save me." It was related in my hearing by one\* who said that he heard it directly from a nurse who attended Thomas Paine in his last hours, that she overheard him commanding his soul to the Savior,— "God help me, O thou Son of God, have mercy upon me." In the hour of sickness and weakness, the Almighty Redeemer, with his divine attributes and his human sympathies, seems to be just such a Savior as we need. We love in health and strength to trust in him, as well as in the swellings of Jordan. We wish our fellow men to do the same.

And now, if any will accept that which has been declared to be, substantially, the evangelical system, while we invite them cordially to come with us into that form of church order which is represented by New England Congregationalism, we do also most cordially bid them take their choice, and go to either of these evangelical denominations, to labor with us for Christ, and to be trained up for heaven; where we

\* Washington Allston.

shall surely meet them, like friends ascending by the different sides of the same hill to keep a festival on the summit. There are three times when all the members of these evangelical sects think and feel alike on the subject of religion: When they first receive the pardon of their sins; when they are on their knees together in prayer; and when they are dying. The faith which they have in those moments is one and the same, in all languages and in all climes; they all declare that it is essential to their salvation, and to yours.

With Christian salutations, and giving the right hand of fellowship, to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, I will now close by repeating some lines of an eminent New England Congregational pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Mitchell, of Cambridge, who died in 1668, of whom it was said that "all New England shook when that pillar fell to the ground." The lines are part of an elegy which he made upon President Dunster, of Harvard College, with whom Mr. Mitchell and others had had great and serious differences of opinion as to the proper subjects of baptism. But when he died, Mr. Mitchell wrote an elegy upon him, containing these thoughts and feelings, which we ourselves shall severally have as we hear of the decease of one and another of those from whom we differ in unessential things, and when we, also, are on the verge of heaven:

“ Where faith in Jesus is sincere,  
That soul he, saving, pardoneth ; —  
What wants or errors else there be  
That may and do consist herewith ;

And though we be imperfect here  
And in one mind can’t often meet.—  
Who know in part, in part may err ;  
Though faith be one, yet all can’t see’t.

Yet may we once the rest obtain  
In everlasting bliss above,  
Where Christ with perfect saints doth reign,  
In perfect light and perfect love ; —

There shall we all like-minded be ;  
Faith’s unity is there full grown ;  
There, one truth all both love and see,  
And thence we perfect are in one.

There Luther both, and Zuinglius,  
Ridley and Hooper, there agree :  
There all the truly righteous,  
*Sans Feud*, live to eternity.”

NOW THE GOD OF PEACE THAT BROUGHT AGAIN  
FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS, THAT GREAT  
SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE  
EVERLASTING COVENANT, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY  
GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL; WORKING IN YOU THAT  
WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST; TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND  
EVER. AMEN.

**01.**

## FIFTH LECTURE.

BY

REV. GEORGE M. RANDALL, D.D.,

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH,  
FLORENCE STREET.

(*Protestant Episcopal*) 211



## V.

### WHY I AM A CHURCHMAN.

---

"THUS SAITH THE LORD, STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS."—Jer. vi. 16.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."—2 Tim. i. 13.

"THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH."—1 Tim. iii. 15.

THE object of this discourse is to indicate the distinctive principles of the *Protestant Episcopal Church*. The enunciation of these is a sufficient answer to the question: Why I am a Churchman,— and cannot preach the Gospel in any other ecclesiastical organization.

There is, and since the days of Abraham, there ever has been, such a thing, on the Earth, as the *Church of God*. He originated it,— He governs and protects it. It is His instrumentality for the reformation,— the regeneration and the salvation of a fallen world. It is that kingdom, which Christ has promised to be with, to the end of time, and against which, the gates of hell shall never prevail. God wrote its constitution, appointed and commissioned its officers. As

man did not originate this organization, so he can neither abrogate nor modify it. He can neither establish the terms of admission nor clothe its rulers with power. If then, the church in its origin and authority is in no sense *human*,—and is in every sense *divine*, we must look for its features, in the only book, where God has written out His will, touching the salvation of men. That Book is the *Bible*. Here, if any where, must we find the charter of the church. Here, the boundaries of this great kingdom are defined. Here the titles and the functions of its officers,—their authority and their duties are declared.

The world is divided into two great classes: those who are within this kingdom, and those who are without it. There is no neutrality in the great contest between a righteous God and a rebellious world. Every man is either an adopted citizen in this great commonwealth of grace, or he is an alien. “They who are not for me are against Him,” is the declaration of Christ.

The lines which mark the boundaries of God’s Kingdom, have been drawn by His own finger, for the darkened eye of the sinner. This fact, of itself, is sufficient to warrant the conclusion, that this demarkation is so distinct and definite, that “the way-faring man, tho’ a fool, need not err therein,” and “he that runs may read.” The church then is God’s Kingdom on earth, protected and preserved by the abiding power

of His own promised presence, and may be as readily recognised by the description contained in the Scriptures, as any earthly kingdom may be known by its Constitution and Statute Book. If there be "no other name given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of *Christ*, and the church is "Christ's mystical body," then it follows, that the sinner must know, *where*, as well as *how* to look for refuge, from the power and penalty of sin. He is not to be sent in search of an *invisible* ark.

The Israelites knew when they crossed the line, and entered "the promised land." The penitent prodigal knew when his father kissed him,—and when his trembling feet crossed the threshold of that father's house.

God made a covenant with Abraham, and with his seed, and with nobody else. This covenant was simple. The seal was definite. The conditions were explicit. All who received the seal, were thereby made parties to the covenant, and all, who were in the covenant, were in the church, and all who were out of the covenant, were out of the church. From Abraham to Christ no person could mistake the Church of God. No intelligent man could be at a loss where to find this divinely ordained society.

From Moses to John, it was equally plain who were the administrators of this kingdom; by whom appointed,—their authority and their functions.

God chose the tribe of Levi, as the ministerial tribe. Of them, He took the family of Aaron, as the priestly family; of these, He selected one for the high priesthood. Thus was the church of Jehovah furnished with a ministry, whose authority came with the great seal of heaven. And although this priesthood did not always please a Holy God, yet no other class of men, however learned or godly, were permitted to perform their sacred duties.\* Thus were the people saved from all confusion in their inquiries for the church, and for the divinely ordained men, who, alone, were empowered to offer sacrifices in behalf of the people, and to teach them the way of life.

In the fullness of time, God Himself descended from His throne to His foot-stool. Here he lived as a man, among men. "He came not to destroy, but to fulfill." His mission was to complete the plan of redemption. It was no part of His gracious errand, to abrogate His own church. There never had been but one church, and there never was to be but one.

"He brought life and immortality to light;" fulfilled prophecy; became the embodiment of all types and figures; put an end to all sacrifices by the sacrifice of Himself. He changed the *seal*, but left the covenant itself untouched. The "*tree*" which He had planted, remained, though "the natural branches were

\* Numbers xvi.

broken off," and the branches of "the wild olive tree were grafted in."\*

The Jewish church had the *Scriptures*,—the *Priesthood* and the *Ordinances*. By these it was every where and by all known, as "the church of the living God."

In Christ the Levitical Priesthood found its complement. In Him that Priesthood ended, and with it, the sacrificial services of the Temple.

From Christ, the Great High Priest, went forth the Gospel, and from Him went forth the commission to men, to preach it, and to administer its ordinances. There was no break in the great chain of grace. The covenant continued as in the beginning. The old church was not pulled down, that a new one might be built up. The Kingdom of Christ was to be known, as the Mosaic Church was known, by the *Word*,—the *Ministry* and the *Ordinances*. Wherever these were, there was "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth." If the dark line of the "Law" was sufficiently distinct, to mark the pale of the Jewish Church, much more clearly would the bright borders of Christ's Kingdom be defined, by the shining of the Sun of Righteousness. It would, indeed, be most extraordinary, if the Church of Christ should be *invisible*, when "the darkness was past"

\* Rom. xi., 17-24.

and the “*True Light*” was now shining in all its un-eclipsed splendor.\* If there were certain infallible marks, by which the *Legal* Church was to be identified, it would be more than marvellous, if there were not marks equally infallible, by which erring men might unerringly distinguish the *Gospel* Church, from every form of human society.

Christ appointed and sent forth, twelve men, whom He denominated His Apostles,—as the Chief Ministers in His church; investing them with authority to preach His Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and exercise discipline, in His Kingdom. He moreover authorized them to send others, in His name, with like powers. He also sent forth the “*Seventy*,” to preach His Word.† Here then, as under the Old Dispensation, we find three grades of the Ministry: *Christ*, the *Apostles*, and the *Elders* or the “*Seventy*.”

On the night of the Savior’s betrayal, He instituted the Sacrament of the *Lord’s Supper*. Just before His ascension, He gave to His Apostles their great commission, “to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity,”‡ Their authority to go, and send others, came to them in these words which constituted a commission that can never expire, until the Church has done its work in the conversion of the

\* “*One net*” Matt. xiii., 47, 48. — “*One field*.” — 24-31.

† Luke x. 1.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

world: "*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" \*

Christ did not call His Disciples together and organize them into a Church, and then direct and empower them to elect and ordain their own ministers. He did not do thus, because these ministers were *His* ministers—the ministers of God; and their successors, to the end of the world, were to be *His* ministers, deriving all their power and authority as such from Him, and from Him alone. In accordance with this commission, the Apostles, soon after the ascension of the Savior, proceeded to ordain a class of ministers, called *Deacons*, whom they empowered to preach and baptize.† Here again appears the threefold ministry: *Apostles, Presbyters and Deacons*. Why God saw fit to have *High Priests, Priests* and *Levites* in the Jewish Church, it is not for us to say. It might have pleased Him to have appointed *one* order, and in that case, one order would have been enough. But for wise reasons, He saw fit to have *three*, and therefore neither one order nor two orders would have answered the end of the Priesthood. This matter of the Threefold Priesthood was not a notion of Moses, but a fiat of God. Why Christ saw fit to establish a similar numerical distinction in the ministry of the Church, I do not know. All we know about it is the fact, and that is all we need to know.

\* John, xx. 21,

† Acts vi. 3-6. 1 Tim. iii. 8, 10-13.

The Savior was on the earth for the space of forty days after His resurrection and before His ascension. During this period, He instructed His inspired Apostles in matters pertaining to His Kingdom. Christ promised that the Comforter, which was the Holy Ghost, when received would teach them all things.\* He told them to remain in Jerusalem until they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.† On the day of Pentecost, the spirit was poured out upon them.‡ While they were yet inspired with the Holy Ghost, and so were taught by it, they ordained men to the third or lowest order of the ministry.§ This distinction was, therefore, not a mere fancy of the Apostles. It was the revealed mind of the Great Head of the Church, in beautiful harmony with the mind of the unchangeable God, as it had been heard and heeded by “Moses and the prophets.” For aught we know, *one* order of the ministry in the Christian Church might have been as good as *three*, and it certainly would have been as good, if Christ had seen fit so to ordain. But He was pleased to appoint *three* orders, and therefore neither *one* nor *two* are or can be sufficient.

It is to be observed, that all this occurs before the New Testament was written, and before the Christian church had any organization, except in its ministry. The ministry had its mission and its commission from

\* John xiv. 26.

† Acts 1. 4, 5.

‡ Acts 11.

§ Acts vi.

Christ, before the church had any organic form whatever.

Here was the church of Christ: a kingdom on earth; a *visible* kingdom among men; for here was the WORD; the written word of the Old Testament, and the unwritten word of the New Testament. Here were the Sacraments, and here was the Ministry. This was the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, and nothing else was. None mistook it; none could mistake it. The believers readily recognized it, and entered it; and the enemies of God had no difficulty in finding it, that they might persecute it. Here was a Christian ministry with their commissions fresh from God. Here was the seal of the covenant, direct from the hand of Christ. Here, then, was the line drawn by the finger of God, around the kingdom of his Son, which marked, with living light, the boundaries which separated it from the kingdom of darkness, and from all organizations of men, for all future ages. The hand of the Almighty wrote over "the narrow gate" of that kingdom, in letters bright and bold enough to be read of all men, this sentence: "*Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"\* This language is sufficiently plain, and exclusive, and uncompromising, to mark the perpetual distinction between the church and the world. That these three

\* John 3. 5.

orders were to be continued in the church, and were to constitute the Christian ministry, for all time to come, and were to go hand in hand with the word and the sacraments, thereby identifying the Christian church throughout the earth, is evident from the history of the church, in the apostolic age.

The original number of the twelve apostles was made good by the appointment of **MATTHIAS** in place of **Judas**.\* The objection that the office of an apostle was a temporary one, instituted solely for the work of laying the foundation of the church, and was therefore confined to the twelve, is effectually silenced by the fact that others were added to this number, and that too, before the canon of the New Testament was completed. Thus the miraculous conversion of **St. Paul**, and his appointment to the first order of the ministry immediately, by Christ himself, proves conclusively that the Order of the Apostles was not to be limited to the college of the twelve, since he was the thirteenth Apostle. **BARNABAS** was also set apart to the work of an Apostle, and he made the fourteenth. And although one qualification of the first Apostles was, that they should have seen the Lord Jesus Christ, and so be witnesses of His resurrection, which was of necessity confined to them as the Apostles, who were commissioned to lay the foundation of the church, yet

\* *Acts 1.*

the power of their office, the commission which they had received from Christ, was transmissible, and so others, by receiving it, would be admitted to the rank of an Apostle. Hence St. Paul ordained Titus to the office of an Apostle, although he had never seen Christ, and was not, therefore, a witness of his resurrection, and as such empowered him to ordain elders in every city.\* He moreover consecrated Timothy to the apostleship, and the churches in Ephesus were placed in his charge.† These Apostles thus ordained and “sent,” had the power to ordain and send forth others, clothed with the like office and ministry. Their commission included, of course, the power to ordain men to the second and third orders. All this is a matter of New Testament record. In the succeeding age, as we learn from ecclesiastical history, wherever the gospel was preached, there was found this three-fold ministry, with the word and the sacraments; and the Christian church appears in no other form.

In the New Testament, the word “Bishop,” which means an “*overseer*,” is applied to the second order of the ministry, interchangeably, with the word “*presbyter*.” Very soon after the death of the first apostles, this title, “*Bishop*,” was applied to the order of the apostles, or the highest grade of the ministry, leaving the original title of apostle to designate those, who

\* Titus 1., 5.

† Note C.

were eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection. Within ten years after the death of St. John, who died in A. D. 100, the three orders of the ministry were designated BISHOPS, PRIESTS, and DEACONS. Ignatius, who was a disciple of St. John, and who was made bishop of Antioch by apostles then living, and who sealed his faith in the blood of martyrdom, in less than ten years after the death of St. John, thus speaks: "Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons."\*

The church rapidly spread in *Asia, Africa, and Europe*. St. Thomas travelled as far east as India. St. Mark preached in Egypt, and founded the church at Alexandria. St. Peter carried the gospel to various parts of Asia, and may have visited Rome. St. Paul not only preached the gospel in Greece, and Rome, and Spain, but it is believed that he planted the standard of the cross in the island of Britain. During the first three centuries, the church grew rapidly, and continued comparatively pure. Wherever found, and by whatever people embraced, it had the word, the sacraments, and the three-fold ministry, with its commission, claiming to have the seal of the apostles. By these divine credentials it was everywhere recognized and submitted to, as "the church of the living God—the pillar and ground of the truth." Such were the

\* Wakes. Ig. pp. 218, 219, 227.

distinctive features of this kingdom, that no one who was looking for it, could possibly mistake it; and no considerable body of men had, as yet, the presumption to put asunder what Christ had joined together.

After the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, the church began to receive the smiles of the world, and the patronage of the state, and then it began to decline in godliness.

Thus far each church had its own bishop, and these were essentially independent of each other. The churches in Asia, Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Britain, were on an equality, and all of them were independent of Rome. The bishop of Rome met other bishops of the church in councils, without having or claiming any superiority. It was not until the seventh century, that the bishop of Rome, having stealthily assumed powers that did not belong to him, was acknowledged by the western churches as a POPE, and not even then without sharp opposition.

The papal supremacy was then, and has ever since been rejected by the Greek and Oriental churches. Henceforth there was a great division in the Christian church. Asia and the east of Europe including Greece, and the north-eastern part of Africa were on the one side, and known as the GREEK CHURCH; and Europe, from Austria westward, was on the other side, and known as the LATIN CHURCH.

The Church of England was founded, probably, in

the Apostolic Age, and, it is said, by the labors of St. Paul. In common with other churches it maintained its independence of the Church of Rome, for five centuries. It had the Word, the Sacraments, and the three-fold Ministry : *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*. It derived the succession, not from the Church of *Rome*, but from the *Apostles*, through the Bishops of *Arles* and *Lyons*, and the *Asiatic Bishops*.

The British Church thus continued, until the time of the Saxon invasion. After that event, the Romish Church, in A. D. 596, sent Augustine, with a company of Missionaries, to that Island. The efforts of these Romans were so far successful, that while the heathen Saxons were converted to Christianity, the British Church herself was gradually brought under the domination of the Romish hierarchy.

When Augustine landed he found the queen an avowed Christian. He found, moreover, a church fully organized, with an Archbishop and seven Bishops. As early as A. D. 400 or 420, a synod of British Christians was held at Verulam, for the purpose of checking the heresy of Pelagius. At the Council of Arles, held in A. D. 314, there were present British Bishops, and, at this time, there were three metropolitans in Britain, and this was two hundred years before there were any Roman missionaries on the island. St. Alban, the proto-martyr, was put to death for his faith, during the persecution under Diocle-

tian in A. D. 305. Almost three hundred years before Rome had a foothold in Britain, the British Church had not only her Bishops but her *martyrs*.

Thus it is evident that the Church was fully established in England, and from a source entirely independent of Rome, nearly five hundred years before the Romish Church sent thither its emissaries.

The shades of the night of the middle ages were now falling upon Christendom. The Pope's supremacy had finally, though reluctantly, been conceded by the western churches, and the successor of St. Peter was beginning to lord it over God's heritage. To the great credit of the English Church, it can be shown, that, during this dark period, there were leading men in that communion who made a bold stand, not only against the usurpations, but against the *corruptions* of popery. In A. D. 961, Archbishop Dunstan did not hesitate to set at defiance the papal mandate, when he deemed it unjust or improper. Alfric Pottock, Archbishop of York from 1023 to 1050, openly impugned the doctrine of transubstantiation. "In the next century, Gilbert Foliat, consecrated Bishop of Hereford in 1148, set at defiance the papal authority, and though twice excommunicated by the Pope, paid no regard to the thunders of the Vatican." "Robert Grostete, or Greathead, Bishop of Lincoln, from 1234 to 1258, visited Rome, and protested against its corruptions before the Pope and Cardinals." He subsequently

“set at naught the Pope’s commands, for which he was excommunicated; but the thunderbolt fell harmless at his feet, and he died in peaceful possession of his See.”\* As late as the twelfth century the Irish Church refused to accede fully to the supremacy of the Pope. For hundreds of years “there was darkness over the promised land” of Christendom, “and gross darkness covered” both ministry and people. Idolatry, superstition, unsound doctrines, and corrupt practices, everywhere prevailed. Yet this was still the Church of Christ. Just as the Jewish Church was the Church of God, while in a state of idolatrous rebellion. In our Savior’s time the ministry of that church had become exceedingly corrupt, yet He recognized them as having divine authority, and in this manner counselled His disciples: “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works.”† In the sixteenth century, the time, in God’s good Providence, had come, when the Apostolic Church of England should arise, and throwing off the papal yoke, again take her rightful place as a branch of the Universal Church of Christ. In doing this “she freed herself from the errors into which she had fallen.”

There was no *new* church created at the Reformation.

\* Chapin on the Primitive Church.

† Matt. xxiii., 1,2.

tion. The English Church, by the help of her divine head, reformed herself. She did not thereby lose her *identity*, much less her Apostolic existence. "The errors of the church were not the church herself, and in quitting them she did not quit herself, any more than a man changes his face when he washes it, or loses his identity when he recovers from a disease. The English Church after the Reformation was as much the English Church, as Naaman was Naaman after he had washed away his leprosy in the river Jordan." During all this period of darkness and corruption, the Church of England did not lose her visibility or her identity. "Job was *visibly* and *verily* Job, when he was covered with sores. So was the church in Britain visible in the darkest hour of that black midnight of ages. She was visible in her churches, in her ordained ministers, in the Holy Sacraments, the Holy Scriptures." She shone forth in the flames of her martyrs, who suffered for the truth.

The rule of reformation which she followed was this: to reject whatever of doctrine was unscriptural, and whatever of usages were contrary to the practice of the church in the first and purest ages. She simply threw off what popery had superadded to the faith. The great difference between the reformation in England and the reformation on the Continent was this: the English Church rejected nothing, simply because the Romish Church held or practiced it, for the reason

that this, of itself, did not make a doctrine or a ceremony wrong. Hence, she retained the ministry in the three orders, of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, a liturgical service, clerical vestments, and other minor matters, none of which were the fruits of the papacy. It is very true, Rome had abused the office of a Bishop, but that was no good reason for rejecting what the Apostles had established. So Rome had more than abused the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, not only by withholding the cup from the laity, but by degrading that divine Ordinance of Christ, into an act of absolute idolatry; yet that most abominable abuse would not justify the rejection of the Sacrament altogether. There were some things which the English Church held, and still hold, in common with the Roman Church, for the good reason that these things were held by the Church in the Apostolic age. On the contrary, the Reformers on the Continent were not content to excise what was corrupt, but in their zeal they cut off what was *Apostolic*. They rejected Episcopacy, because the Bishop of Rome was a Pope. As well might they have rejected the Bible and the Lord's Supper.

The multitude of sects which subsequently sprang up, carried this unlicensed liberty to still greater extremes. There were the "Independents," who not only rejected Episcopacy, but Presbyterianism also, and so refused all ministry that pretended to an Apos-

tolie commission, and accepted such only as the con-gregation should make for themselves, hence they were called "*Congregationalists*." Then there were the *Quakers*, who rejected not only the ministry but the Sacraments. The Puritans, who would not tolerate either the Episcopacy of England or the Presbyterian-ism of Geneva, and who felt aggrieved at the union of church and state, in consequence of their sufferings as dissenters, emigrated to this country in search of that liberty which they could not enjoy at home. They had hardly placed their feet on Plymouth Rock ere they formed a state and joined it to the church, so that the colonial daughter, in her infancy, rivaled her venerable mother in the tenacity with which she cher-ished the unnatural wedlock of church and state. Nor was she very much behind her queenly matrons in the zeal with which she maintained the supremacy of her established religion, as Quakers, Baptists and Churchmen could feelingly attest.

The members of the Church of England in the colo-nies were comparatively few. Nevertheless, several parishes were organized in New England, and in New York, and Virginia. In Massachusetts, churchmen felt the fires of persecution, which puritan hands had lighted on the shores of the new world. Among other enactments, it was made a penal offence for any person to observe the festival of Christmas by a religi-ous service. So that if a churchman should sing a

Psalm of Praise to God, in this city of Boston, in commemoration of the birth of Christ, he would be liable to be thrust into a dungeon.\*

Episcopal clergymen were sent over from England, and chiefly maintained by Missionary Societies in the English Church. The parishes here were, nominally, under the care of the Bishop of London. When the colonies declared their independence of the mother country, then there was a necessary abrogation of the ecclesiastical relations, which the Episcopal Church here sustained to the Church of England.

In the year 1784, the Rev. Samuel Seabury was elected to the office of Bishop, by the clergy of Connecticut, and was consecrated by certain Bishops in Scotland. The Rev. William White of Pennsylvania, Rev. Samuel Provost of New York, and the Rev. James Madison of Virginia, were consecrated Bishops in England; the first two in 1787, and the last named in 1790. The organization of the Episcopal Church in the United States was very soon completed. And here were the *Word*, the *Sacraments*, and the *Ministry*, in the three orders of *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, in an unbroken succession, from the Apostles. This divine commission has thus come down to us from Christ. It has to-day just the same freshness and authority that it had, when St. Paul ordained Titus with power to ordain others in like manner.

\* Note A.

The Bishops of the American Church can trace their ecclesiastical lineage through Archbishop Sheldon, up through the old English, Italian, and Irish Episcopate, to the Apostolic Age. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States claims to be a branch of "the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The Church of Christ, all admit, is an *entity*;—it is somewhere, and must be known by something. Where is it, and what are the signs of it? I answer: It is to be found wherever the Word, the Ministry, and the Sacraments are found. However it may be with others, for whom we do not speak, we claim to have these *three*. The Church of *Christ*, which "He bought with His blood," which He has promised to be with, to the end of the world, is not just what wicked or even pious men choose to make it; one thing in one place, and a totally different thing in another place. The church is like its Divine Head in the essential qualities of its being: "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." There are men who reject the Bible: they don't believe the Word of God. Are they the church? There are others who reject the Sacraments. They recognise no covenant, and so repudiate the seal of it. Are they the church? There are men that scout the divinity of Christ, laugh at His Miracles, and talk of the coming of better men than He. Are they the church? There are others who do not believe in any

ministry. Are they the Church of Christ? Others pretend to have a revelation of their own, superior to the Bible—the followers of Mahommed, Sweedenborg, and Smith, with revelations as contradictory to each other, as they all are contradictory to the Word of God. Are they the Church of God's only Son? There is the latest spiritual swindle, which has turned the minds of men till they are made to believe that a man can have a better book than the Bible rapped out for him at his own fireside. Are these people, who "seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter," are they the Church of Christ? Can it be that the Savior, who knew what is in man, and who foresaw in what eccentric forms man's depraved folly would develop itself, should place His church in the world, as the *exclusive* instrumentality for the salvation of men, without any infallible marks, by which it might be distinguished from all things human, and all things devilish? Such an idea is preposterous. The world is as wicked, as rebellious, as curious, as inventive, as fond of change and of novelty now, as in the days of Moses and the Prophets, and as in the time of Christ and His Apostles. The marks of the Jewish Church were such, in that "wicked and adulterous generation," that nobody was in any danger of confounding that church with any other organization. Would Christ make the marks of the *Christian* Church to be less distinct? His

church is here, among men; it has been here more than eighteen hundred years, and it is to continue here, until the last great day. Amid the noise, and confusion, and conflict, which fill the world, as the offspring of sin, this church is to do its great work, and there will never be an hour when it may not be identified as "the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." It may be known now, and for all time to come it will be known, as it has been known for more than eighteen centuries. Wherever there "is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things, that of necessity are requisite to the same,"\* there is "the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." By whatever name it may be known, or whoever may be its members, that organization is the Church of Christ, as distinguished from all devices of men.

Do you ask how we may be sure of a ministry of "unbroken succession," from the Apostles, holding and handing down their commission from Christ? I answer,—just as you know how this Bible has come down to us, "a true copy" of the original manuscript, written by the inspired pen of the Apostles. This

\* 19th Art.

Holy Bible, and this ministerial commission, have been transmitted by the same hands. They have both been guarded by that vigilance of the church, in all ages, which warrants the confidence that is now, and ever has been entertained by the faithful, everywhere, in the authenticity of that book, which we call the Bible.\*

Is it objected, that this is an exclusive claim on the part of a comparatively small minority of Christendom? To this I answer: that for fifteen hundred years, from the Apostles, there *was no other ministry* in the Christian Church. Wherever the Church existed there were these three orders: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, claiming to come from the Apostles. But it may be asked: What relation does Episcopacy bear to other forms of ministry, at the *present* time? To this question I reply, that if it were in the minority, in point of numbers, that fact could by no possibility affect its claim to Apostolic authority. The popular will in a particular locality cannot change the principles of truth. Principles are not like politicians, made and unmade by a majority of voices. There are in the world, at the present time, about *two hundred millions* of people, who bear the christian name. Of these two hundred millions, one hundred and eighty millions acknowledge the authority of the Apostolic

\* Note D.

ministry, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. It appears then, that at the present time, about four fifths of all Christendom retain the ministry as the Apostles established it, and as the whole Church retained it for fifteen hundred years. It may be objected, that such a view of the ministry is an acknowledgment, that the Romish and Greek communions have the apostolic ministry, and are therefore Churches of Christ. We aver that they are Christian Churches, holding more or less of error. But their errors do not vitiate their Orders. Their abuse of the ministerial commission does not annihilate that commission. As I have already said, the Scribes and Pharisees were so corrupt, in doctrine and in life, that the Savior likened them "to whited sepulchres full of all uncleanness," and yet, in His day, they sat in Moses' seat, and by His command His disciples were required to recognize their divine commission, while they were to be careful to avoid the contamination of their evil example. "Baal-  
lam was a wicked man, but a true Prophet."\* "The Sons of Eli, bad as they were, ceased not to be Priests."† It may be asked, if our Protestant Priesthood is not indebted for its existence to a reformation brought about by Henry the VIII. to gratify his own evil passions? Suppose we admit all this, what then? "Henry was an agent in effecting this great work; still

\* Num. xxii. to xxiv; xxxi. 16.

† 1 Saml. ii.

the work-man is not the work. The Temple of Solomon was constructed with cedars of Lebanon hewn by workmen of *heathen* Tyre. Jehu did not please God; but his reformation did. Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus were idolatrous; but their edicts for God's service were religious. The Temple, in which our Lord was presented and in which He preached, and worshipped, had been repaired by the impious and cruel Herod, who sought the Lord's life.\* So in the matter of the Reformation, the character of the agency did not affect the integrity of the work itself. There are not a few among the less enlightened of the community, who regard the Episcopal Church, whose distinctive principles I am here to explain, as but a slight remove from the Roman Catholic Church. While others, a little less bigoted, condescend to confess, that while ours is something of an improvement upon the papal communion, yet we are the legitimate offspring of the "mistress of abominations," and carry the lineaments of the scarlet mother in our countenances too distinctly to leave any doubt of our pedigree. In reply, we have only to say; that ours is a *Protestant* Church in the most comprehensive sense of that term. It did not originate from the papal communion. It is no offspring of Rome. As I have already shown, the English Church had an existence five hundred years

\* Theop. Americanus, p. 199.

before Roman Catholic missionaries visited the Island of Great Britain. In the seventh century she was overcome by Popery; and in the sixteenth century she threw off that yoke of papal bondage, and stood, where she stood before, an apostolic church, with a ministry which came to her from apostolic hands, through Bishops who were not of Rome. So much as to the taint of parentage. In clearing herself of the corruptions of Romanism, at the Reformation, she uttered her perpetual "*Protest*" against the heresies of that church, in tones that made the Vatican tremble. The Episcopal Church Romish! I ask, who fought the battles of the Reformation? From whose ranks came forth, during this eventful period, that noble army of martyrs, who went to Heaven from the plains of Smithfield, in chariots of fire? Who were the mighty men of that age of ecclesiastical revolution, whose lives and learning were consecrated to the work of exposing the unscriptural dogmas of Rome, whose strong hands were stretched forth to strip the pontifical robes from that graceless tyrant, who had so long and so effectually enslaved Christ's freemen? Who were the bold preachers of that day, the men that "took their lives in their hands," and went forth to denounce the usurpations of priestly power, and the practice of the idolatrous rites of Romanism? English churchmen, every one of them! The Episcopal Church Romish! I ask the men who make this assertion, where do you bor-

row the weapons wherewith you assault Popery? Whose arguments do you use, whose learning do you employ, whose books do you study, when you attack the Papacy? Do not every one of these zealous boasters go to the armory, which the Old English Divines have so richly furnished, for every weapon they use against Romanism? Can they bring forward a single strong protestant argument, which is new, or which cannot be found in the writings of the champions of the Reformation in the Church of England? If all this be so, why do men stultify themselves by continually ringing changes upon that well worn saw of "Popery in Episcopacy"? But more than this, I challenge any body of Christians to produce one tithe of the amount of printed standard authority for doctrines, which are anti-papal, as the Protestant Episcopal Church can show in her Prayer Book and Homilies. Until these accusers can do something like this, they should cease to make the charge of Romanism or Romish tendencies against our church. But it is said that our ministers go to Rome. Admitting that such may have been the fact in some instances, what does this prove? Does it show that our's is a school of papacy? No more than the treason of Judas proved that the college of the Apostles was a school of Apostacy. There are nearly twenty thousand Protestant Episcopal Clergy-men in the English and American Episcopal Churches; and within the last ten years, there may have been

among them one hundred defections to Rome. Take twenty thousand ministers of the other protestant bodies in this country, if there be so many here, and see how many of this number have been displaced from the ministry, during the last ten years, for errors in doctrine and life. You will probably find two for every one that has gone to Rome, from the Episcopal Church; and do you *therefore* conclude that these respectable denominations are necessarily tending to infidelity and immorality?

There is another view of this matter, which should be taken. We get credit for conversions to Romanism, to which we are not entitled. A very large proportion of the defections to popery, in the Episcopal church in the United States, both of clergy and laity, are persons, who have come into our fold from the various denominations around us. Many of them are fatally infected before they come among us; they stay long enough to break out with the loathsome disease, and then we, forsooth, get the name of having a "pest-house," and all godly people are warned to keep clear of the Church, if they wish to preserve their faith in good health. It, however, has happened in many cases, that persons have gone direct to the Church of Rome, from the communions in which they have been reared, without taking the Episcopal Church in their way. This has been the fact in this State. The converts to popery, in Boston, for the last ten years, have

represented the Orthodox Congregationalist, the Baptist, and the Unitarian denominations.

The *protestant* character of our communion is seen in this, that when a man once becomes a papist, he cannot stay in it. He cannot teach its doctrines, nor use its prayers, nor enjoy its services. He is not at home; he “goes out from us because he is not of us,” and like Judas, finds “his own place.” We need no better witnesses of the thoroughly protestant character of our church, than the testimony of perverts to Rome.

The Episcopal Church is *protestant* in another sense. The world, as it stands aloof from the kingdom of Christ, is intelligent enough to perceive, that all the errors in Christendom are not clustered about the “seven hills;” that there are those who have departed from the faith, who do not wear the livery of the Vatican.

The Episcopal Church assaults the faith of none. She makes no war upon the system of others. She is content with simply maintaining her own Apostolic standards, and in this unobtrusive manner, protesting against their multiform errors. She beholds the serried ranks of the Romans on the one hand, and the motley multitude of the conflicting sects on the other. Of these sects none are over three hundred years old, and many of them are much younger; some of them came into being, within the memory of persons in this congregation.

In respect to church government, other protestant bodies may be divided into three classes: Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational. This last includes all who adopt that mode of church government; embracing Baptists, Unitarians, Orthodox Congregationalists, Universalists, a part of the Methodists, Quakers, Shakers, &c. The *Methodists*, have an Episcopal form of government. Their ministry consists of Bishops, Elders and Deacons; but their episcopacy only reaches to John Wesley; whereas to be valid, it should go back to the Apostles. Mr. Wesley was a godly minister in the Church of England, at a time when pious preachers were not as numerous in that church as they are now. His heart burned within him for a true revival of pure and undefiled religion, of which there was great need. God blessed his preaching. Multitudes became interested. These new converts were Church of England people, and their zealous devotion to the duties of religion procured for them the soubriquet of **METHODISTS**; a title first given to Mr. Wesley at the University of Oxford, by way of reproach, for his exactness of life. Mr. Wesley never intended to be the founder of a sect. He says, at a meeting of their preachers in 1744, "I exhorted them to keep to the church; observing that this was our peculiar glory — not to form any new sect, but abiding in our own church, to do to all men all the good we possibly could." A strong sectarian spirit having

manifested itself, and Mr. Wesley desiring to bring the matter to an issue, caused the question to be discussed, and it was finally decided, without a dissenting voice, that "It is by no means expedient that the Methodists should leave the Church of England." So strong was this feeling, that the following declaration was inserted in the first rules of their society: "*they that leave the church, leave us.*" "And this we did," says Mr. Wesley, "*not as a point of prudence, but* a point of conscience. In 1789, two years before his death, he used these words: "I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate from it." "In his sermon, preached at Cork, about the same time, he declared to the preachers in his connection, that they had no right to baptize and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." His design was to improve the state of religion *in* the church; and, as he said, he did not dare to leave the church. "Mr. Wesley, when he was eighty years of age, in a private chamber of a public house in Bristol, England, was induced to lay his hands upon the head of Rev. Dr. Coke, a Presbyter of the Church of England, appointing him as a *superintendent* over the missionary operations of the Methodists in America. On Dr. Coke's arrival in this country, he proceeded to lay his hands on the head of a Mr. Asbury, a layman, and thereby ordained him to

the same office of superintendent. These two men soon began to call themselves Bishops. When Mr. Wesley heard of this, he immediately rebuked their arrogation of an office and title, which he never pretended to have conveyed. In a letter to Mr. Asbury, he says: '*How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be elected a Bishop?* I shudder, I start at the very thought. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put an end to this.''\* This was the origin of Methodist Episcopacy. In the matter of the ministry, the Methodists have the "form, without the power." Mr. Wesley could not give to another what he had never received himself. Not being a Bishop he could not confer Episcopal powers on Dr. Coke, and never intended to confer any such power.† The Episcopal Church cannot, of course, recognize an Episcopacy originating with a Presbyter of the Church of England, as Apostolic, and therefore valid. The Presbyterians originated with John Calvin, at the Reformation.‡ They believe in one order of the ministry. They hold, as Episcopalian do, to the doctrine of an Apostolic succession, with this difference; we adhere to the three orders, as they have come down from the Apostles; they hold to the parity of the ministry, of which there is no historical proof, over three hundred years old. "The origin of the Congrega-

\* Richardson's "Reasons," &c.

† Note B.

‡ Note M.

tionalists is commonly ascribed to Robert Brown, who organized a church in England in 1583, who were called Brownists." There may have been some churches formed upon Congregational principles a few years earlier, in the reign of Edward VI. and Queen Mary. Brown's church, however, seems to have come to nought. About the beginning of the 17th century, *John Robinson* appeared, who has been called the father of Modern Congregationalism. He gathered a congregation in England, went to Holland, and thence a portion of his people emigrated to America in 1620. They rejected the doctrine of an Apostolical succession of the ministry. They regarded the congregation as having all power, in the matter of conferring the ministerial commission. Hence, the congregation having chosen one of their number a minister, had a right to ordain him, and having ordained him he was thereby made a minister of Christ. The Episcopal Church holds to the principle, that no man can give to another a power that he does not himself possess; that a congregation of men cannot make ministers of God, any more than they can make Sacraments. A stream can never run higher than the fountain from which it proceeds. Christ called and sent his Apostles with power to send others. This was before the church had any organic form. He did not organize a congregation and give them power to commission his ministers. On the other hand the

ministers, with their commissions from Christ, gathered and organized the believers into congregations and churches.\* The first Baptist Church of which there is any record, was organized in March, 1639, by Roger Williams, in Rhode Island. Mr. Williams was a minister of the Church of England. Mr. Ezekiel Holliman, a layman, immersed Mr. Williams, and Mr. Williams in turn immersed Mr. Holliman. This denomination hold that by baptism, a person is admitted into the church of Christ, and that *immersion* is the only mode of baptism. Hence, all who have not been immersed are *unbaptized*. Mr. Holliman was not only not a minister, but he was not a *member* of the church, and so this layman, himself *unbaptized*, administers baptism to Mr. Williams. With such a baptism, Mr. Williams proceeds to baptize as a minister. And then and there commenced the Baptist Church. The first association of Baptists was held in London in 1689.† In respect to a body of Christians who reject infants from the covenant,—who restrict the administration of baptism to one mode,—whose baptism is to be traced to a layman,—whose ministerial commission came from the congregation, and that only a little more than two hundred years ago, the Episcopal Church must be *Protestant*. To the Unitarians, who are still younger,—who have

\* Note N.

† Note I.

neither the Apostolic Ministry nor the Apostolic faith,—the Quakers, who have neither the Ministry nor the Sacraments,—the Shakers, and the multitude of sects whose peculiarities I cannot describe,—to all these the Episcopal Church is simply PROTESTANT. By quietly but firmly adhering to the “faith once delivered to the Saints,”—by holding to the Ministry as the Apostles ordained and transmitted it, she bears her faithful testimony against every form of error, whether it spring from *Rome* or *Geneva*, *England* or *America*.

II. I now propose to notice very briefly the *doctrines* of the Church. I. The teaching of the church on the subject of *human depravity*. I will here take occasion to remark, that the doctrines of the church are set forth in her Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies. In these she teaches that “all men are conceived and born in sin,”\* and “there is no health in us.”† “Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature, inclined to evil.”‡

Such is the Church’s teaching of the natural sinfulness of man.

\* Baptismal Service.

† Gen. Con.

‡ Art. IX.

2. What is her belief in the nature and necessity of a *change of heart*? In one of her Articles, and almost everywhere in her offices, she teaches and inculcates, as a fundamental doctrine of Scripture, man's utter inability to do anything good, without God's "special grace, which he must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." The language of her 10th Article is: "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." Morning and evening her ministers pray: "O God, make clean our hearts within us." In the collect for Ash Wednesday occurs this petition, "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts."

3. The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ is interwoven with every part of the Prayer Book. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine forth from every page of the liturgy. The Divinity of the Son of God is, as it were, crystalized in the liturgy. The Church everywhere holds up Christ, in His divine nature, as the corner stone of all she has, or does, or hopes for, in the work of salvation. In the fact of His death she recognizes the great atoning sacrifice

for the sins of the whole world. In the all sufficiency of that atonement, she trusts and thus expresses her belief in the language of her 31st Article: "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."

4. The doctrine of the Trinity is held and taught as one of the first principles of the Gospel, and is fully set forth in the Liturgy and Articles.

5. Touching the doctrine of justification by faith, nothing can be more explicit than the language of the 11th Article: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

It is the less necessary to elaborate a scriptural argument to prove, that these cardinal doctrines are a part of the "faith once delivered to the Saints," inasmuch as we hold them in common, with what are termed the Orthodox or Evangelical bodies of Protestant Christians around us.

The Church, in her 27th Article, sets forth the duty of bringing children to baptism in these words: "The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

Infant baptism was practised universally throughout Christendom, until the 17th century, and is in accordance with the practice of nineteen-twentieths of all Christendom at the present day.

When God first established His church on earth, He decided, for reasons which it does not become us to inquire into, that His church should be composed of *adults* and *infants*. By His explicit command little children, at the age of eight days, were to be made members of the Church, by receiving the seal of the Covenant. When Christ was an infant, He too was circumcised. When He entered upon his ministry, he changed the *seal*, but he did not change the covenant or the subjects of it. All the time he was on the earth infants were circumcised. The rite was held most dear by his own people, the Jews, and of it they were jealous, as of a privilege of inestimable value. They charged Christ with many things, and sought by every expedient in their power, to bring reproach upon Him, and dishonor upon his cause. They endeavored on every occasion, to stir up the people against him, and yet, strange to say, they never charged him with depriving them of the privilege of placing their children within the covenant. Very many things in the Mosaic Church were to be abrogated. Christ did not leave either his friends or his enemies in any doubt, as to what he taught. If there was to be a change so fundamental as this—one which touched a tender

spot in the heart of every child of Abraham—one that was so completely to revolutionize the mode of membership—how can we account for the Savior's silence? We are sometimes tauntingly challenged to produce a single instance of infant baptism, in the New Testament, as if the want of such a record was an unanswerable argument in proof, that the practice is unscriptural. That very silence is one of the strongest arguments in its favor. If children had been admitted to the church from the time of Abraham, a period of more than eighteen hundred years, and they were to continue to be members of the covenant, through all time to come, why should anything be said about it, what occasion would there be to speak of it? If, on the other hand, this custom of eighteen hundred years was to be abrogated, and children were no longer to be members of the church, then we should look for some explicit mention of it. In the second century we find this custom prevailing everywhere throughout the Christian Church; nobody objecting to it as an innovation, or as a new doctrine, which the Apostles did not teach. If it did not have the sanction of Christ and His Apostles, how could it have been thus early introduced universally, in the church, with no record of a single objection from any quarter, and that, too, in an age, when men were living, who had conversed with those who had seen the Apostles, and this, too, in the purest period of the church, when the least indica-

tion of error in doctrine was promptly met and promptly put down? While the date of the introduction of every heresy in the Christian Church can be readily pointed out, the most learned opponent of infant baptism has never yet been able to adduce a particle of credible historical testimony which tells the time and the place where this error took its rise.\*

To say that an unconscious child is not a fit subject for membership in the church of the living God, is to accuse the Almighty of folly. Let it be remembered that the idea of infant membership of the church was not a suggestion of Abraham, but a *command* of Jehovah. It is sometimes objected, that Christ came to bring the Mosaic dispensation to an end, with all that pertained to it. If this were so, the chain of the argument is not long enough to reach *Infant* Baptism, for that was not a *Mosaic*, but a *Patriarchal* institution.

As to the *mode* of baptism, the church considers that the application of water to the person, by the minister, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is valid baptism, whether it be by aspersion or by immersion. Sacraments are essentially symbols, and it is plain that the significance of a symbol cannot depend upon its quantity. There must be *water* in the sacrament of baptism, as there must be bread and wine in the sacrament of the

\* Note E.

Lord's Supper. To the communicant who receives in faith, a crumb of bread and a drop of wine are to him as essentially a sacrament as a loaf of bread and cup of wine possibly could be. Moreover, the word *baptize*, whatever it may mean when used by heathen classics, does not mean exclusively *immersion* as used in Holy Scripture. If we would know the definition of this term as employed in the Gospel, we are not to go to the dictionaries for its signification, but to the **BIBLE**.

There is no passage in the Old or New Testament, where it can be shown that this word means immersion. The most that can be said is, that in certain texts immersion is possible, and perhaps probable. On the other hand, there are texts in which the word occurs, where it not only does not, but *cannot* mean *immersion*. Thus we are told that the Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.\* And yet the Israelites were on "dry land," and "under the cloud." There is, then, a baptism which a person may receive while standing on *dry land*. Such a baptism cannot, by any possibility, be immersion.

Again; Christ promised that his disciples should be baptized with the Holy Ghost.† Thus the Savior explicitly declared, that when the Apostles should receive the Holy Spirit it would be a *baptism*. On

\* 1 Cor. x. 2. — Exodus xiv. 16-22.  
tnr

† Acts 1. 5.

the day of Pentecost, they received the fulfillment of this promise. In what way? Let St. Peter answer: "This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass, in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh."\* We have here the declaration of a prophet that the Holy Spirit would be "*poured out*." We have the declaration of the Savior, that the Holy Spirit would be given to his Apostles, and when given, it would be a *baptism*. We have the testimony of St. Peter, that the promise of Christ, and the prophecy of Joel were both fulfilled on the day of Pentecost; and so we have here, on an authority that cannot be gainsaid, a definition of the word *baptism*, viz: "*pouring*;" and thus *baptism* and *pouring* are one and the same thing.

Again, we are told by St. Mark that "the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not." "And when they come from the market, except they baptize (*βαπτίσωνται*), they eat not." In our English version it is translated wash. Here the application of a small quantity of water to a small portion of the body is called a *baptism*. No one will pretend, that every time a Jew went home from the market, he plunged into the water all over. We learn the custom from the context, "Except they wash (*νιψώνται*) their hands oft, they eat not." Says St. Mark: "Many

\* Acts 11. 16, 17.

other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the baptism ( $\mathbf{\betaαπτισμοίς}$ ) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables.”\* In our version it is rendered washings. These baptisms were purifications from legal or ceremonial uncleanness. Does anybody suppose, that every time a table or a couch was defiled by the merest touch of something legally unclean, that it was immersed in water? The thing would be utterly impracticable. Besides, there is no evidence whatever that the Jews ever did any such thing. If you would know what these baptisms were, and how they were performed, you have only to turn to the Book of Numbers,† where the whole ceremony is described, and consists in sprinkling water upon the furniture to be cleansed, with a bunch of hyssop. For this purpose families were supplied with “water-pots of stone, containing two or three firkins apiece.”‡ The word *baptize* has a generic meaning, similar to our English word *travel*. A person is said to travel when he walks when he rides upon a horse, when he sails in a ship. A person is baptized when he is immersed, when he is sprinkled, and when water is poured upon him. The ministers of the Episcopal Church baptize by immersion, when that mode is required by those who are to receive it. The almost universal practice is, however, by aspersion. To hold to immersion as the only mode

\* Mark vii. 4.

† Num. xix. 18.

‡ John iii. 6.

of baptism, would involve ministers in a serious dilemma. The command of Christ is to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and baptize them." There is no exception made in favor of any class whatever. If immersion be the only mode, then a person who is on a dying bed cannot be baptized. If he have an acute disease in his *body*, his *soul* cannot be admitted into covenant with God, and cannot have the benefit, that pertains to a covenant relation to God. What is disease but a fruit of the fall? In this case the effect of sin in a perishing body is made an effectual barrier against the admission of the soul into the kingdom of God; for Christ has said, — "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."\* Can we suppose that the Savior would institute any such mode of admission into his spiritual kingdom, as could be enjoyed only by those who were favored with good bodily health? What has the condition of a man's *mortal* body to do with the salvation of his *immortal* spirit? Baptism is the seal of the covenant, and may be applied to every creature, whatever the condition of his body. Christ's spiritual kingdom is brought into no such relationship to the infirmities of human life, and the salvation of the soul is put into no such condition of dependence, upon the health of

\* John iii. 5.

the body. Leaving the doctrines of the church, we pass to a brief notice of its worship.

I have thus far considered those distinctive *principles* of the church which are necessary to its existence: the Word, the Sacraments, and the Ministry. I now proceed to consider the distinctive features of our church, which, though important, are not absolutely essential, and may be modified.\*

III. The public services of the sanctuary are conducted according to a prescribed form. What is the *authority* and what is the *utility* of a Liturgy? I hardly need remark, that forms of prayer are no new thing. If you ask me where they originated, I answer in *Heaven*. The very first suggestion of a precomposed form of divine service, came from God himself. Liturgies are, therefore, no human invention.

When the Tabernacle had been erected, and the people gathered into it, God gave to Moses a form of words wherewith he should bless the people when they departed, saying: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," etc.† When an Israelite brought to the priest "the first fruits," he was required to repeat a certain form of words. Just before the death of Moses, God commanded him to write a song commemorative of God's mercies, which the Israelites and their descend-

\* Preface to the Prayer Book.

† Num. vi. 22-26.

ants were required to use. In the synagogues the Jews had a Liturgy in the time of Christ. In this service he himself joined. He rebuked the Jews for many things, but never for using a Liturgy. He reproved them for *formality*, but never for using forms of prayer. He reproved the Pharisees for their pride, and formality, and long "prayers, which they made standing at the corners of the streets, to be seen of men." These prayers were made to attract the public attention, and so to win the praise of passers-by, and, therefore, they were probably extemporaneous.

The Jews had never been accustomed to any other than a *Liturgical* form of worship. When John the Baptist appeared, who was the appointed forerunner of Christ, whose ministry was not of the Jewish economy, while the Christian church was not yet established, he very naturally prepared a service suited to his peculiar mission. He gave to his disciples a form of prayer.

When Christ entered upon his ministry, he continued to attend upon the Temple and Synagogue service, and sometimes took part in that service.\* When his disciples came to him, with the request that he would furnish them with a form of prayer, as John had done for his disciples, he did not say that John did that, which was indeed allowed in the Jewish service,

\* Luke iv. 16, 20.

but was not to be permitted in the more spiritual worship of the Christian Church. So far from this, he immediately framed a form of prayer, gave it to his disciples and told them to use it. And what is not a little remarkable, this form is taken mainly from the Jewish Liturgy.\* It is sometimes objected by those who are not accustomed to a Liturgical service, that prayers in a particular form of words cannot come from the heart. When our Savior was in the garden, on the night of his betrayal, he prayed in the midst of the agonies of that awful hour. Think you the prayer he offered to his Father, did not come from his heart? Yet he used a *form!* He prayed three times, using the same words.† Again, when hanging on the cross he prayed. Did ever mortal man doubt, that the prayer upon the cross came from the heart of that crucified Savior? And yet that prayer was a form. This prayer was: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;" a quotation from the 22d Psalm. The last sentence that fell from his lips, ere he gave up the ghost, was taken from the 31st Psalm: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Thus the Savior of the world died with a form of prayer upon his lips. The Apostles, like their divine master, were accustomed to the Liturgical worship of the Jews;—they, with him, attended the Temple and the Synagogue service. Such

\* Note F.

† Matthew xxvi. 36, 44.

was the strength of their attachment to a Liturgy, and so firm the habit of using a form, that on the occasion of the liberation of St. Peter from prison, when their hearts were overflowing with joy, and when, if ever, they would spontaneously express their gratitude in an extemporeaneous thanksgiving, they employed a *form*, "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said," &c. The form has been recorded by St. Luke. It is chiefly from a Psalm of David.\* We are not then surprised to find the churches which they planted, employing forms of prayer in their worship. For fifteen hundred years Liturgies were everywhere used in the Church of Christ. The Christian world was pleasantly surprised some years ago, by the announcement that the celebrated traveller, Dr. Buchanan, had discovered a church of Syrian Christians who had, for hundreds of years, remained in concealment from the Christian world, in the mountain fastness of the coast of Malabar. They had the three orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and they had also a *Liturgical* form of worship. Their tradition is, that St. Thomas visited their country and founded their church. They have thus been preserved by the great Head of the Church, and after the lapse of so many ages, come forward in this nineteenth century, to bear their testimony to Apostolic doctrines and usages.

\* Acts iv. 23, 30.

At the Reformation the English Church retained a prescribed form of worship. From that church we received the Book of Common Prayer, which, with a few unimportant alterations, is now used in the Protestant Episcopal Church.\* The spiritual excellency of the service, and the divine authority for forms of prayer, have taught us to heed the injunction of the Apostle, to "*hold fast the form of sound words.*"

Many of the Protestant Communions, who do not have the Apostolic Ministry, yet retain forms of prayer. It may be safely said, that about nineteen twentieths of all Christendom have some kind of a Liturgy.

We see then, that extemporaneous modes of worship are, comparatively, a novelty, and are practised by only a very small fraction of Christendom. The difference between our mode of worship and that of those denominations of Christians around us, who repudiate a Liturgy, is not, as it is sometimes stated, a question whether divine service should be conducted with a form of prayer, or without a form of prayer. All use a *form*. There is no such thing as a formless mode of worship. They who pretend to discard every appearance of form, are sometimes the most formal. Thus the Quakers are rigidly formal in their worship.

When a minister rises in the pulpit, to conduct the

\* Note G.

services of public worship, he says, and that very properly: "*Let us pray.*" What does he mean? Simply this: he asks the congregation to unite with him in prayer to Almighty God. He does not say, let *me* pray; but let *us* pray,—you and me. Yet, he is the only person who prays aloud. How then are the people to do as he has asked them to do? They are to pray by *uniting* with him; i. e., he frames a petition, speaks it aloud, and so hands it over to them, and they take it, and unite with him in offering it to God, as *their* petition. He makes the *form*, and they use it. The difference then between such and ourselves is this: that inasmuch as we *must* have a *form* of prayer, they prefer to trust to their minister to make it for them on the occasion, without knowing what it is to be; and we prefer to have one already made which we know all about; so that we pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also. The Church proceeds, in matters of public worship, on the principle, that the house of God is the "*house of prayer.*" That the great business of the Lord's people on the Lord's day, is to worship him in the beauty of holiness. The people cannot commission any one else to do this for them. There are no proxies in the duties of religion. We cannot delegate to another a duty which God requires of us. Our form of worship is framed upon the principle, that there are to be no *spectators* in the congregation of God's people. All sorts

and conditions of men are there for a purpose, and that purpose is the worship of God. One, as much as another, is required to acknowledge his sinfulness,—invoke the divine forgiveness,—praise God for his blessings, and ask for his future grace and guidance. All then, young and old, should join in the services of the Sanctuary. Some good people seem to entertain the idea, that prayer, in order to be prayer, *must be extemporaneous*; that only such prayers come from the heart. They forget, that while all true prayer does come and must come from the heart, i. e., it is and must be the sincere language of the soul, yet *words*, whether extemporaneous or written, do not come from the *heart* but from the *head*. What God requires, and what the necessities of our being demand is, that the words we use, (and which serve only as the vehicle of our petitions), should be such as properly and reverently express our sincere desires to God. Prayers are not *orations*. They are not addressed to men, but to God. (They are not designed to produce an effect on earth) but in heaven. God is not particularly pleased with a variety. “He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

Some persons fancy that they should tire of the use of the same modes of expression, Sunday after Sunday. The proper answer to such is this: they do not tire of the use of the same modes of expression, Sunday after Sunday, where they now are. If the extemporaneous

prayers of the most gifted minister, were to be written down, as he offers them, on every occasion of public worship, for the space of a year, it would be found that there is but a very little variety in the devotional exercises of his pulpit. Again, if some of our beloved brethren in other societies, were as familiar with the Prayer Book, as they might be, they would know to what source they are sometimes indebted, for some of the choicest passages in the extemporaneous prayers of their Pastors. Man is so constituted that he cannot serve two masters at the same time, either in his inner or in his outer life. A deep exercise of devotion and an active exercise of the mind cannot well be carried on, in the same soul at one and the same time. If the mind of a minister is in a deep study as to what he shall say and *how* he shall say it, while he is thus engaged in searching after thoughts and suitable language in which to clothe them, there cannot be a very lively exercise of the spirit of pure devotion in his heart. But what is the condition of the hearers in the mean time? Their minds are exercised, because they must be on the alert, since they know not what is coming. And when the words come, it may be that they are not all of them suitable, or are not grammatically expressed, or come after much stammering and hesitation, or they are in the form of petitions for things, which the worshipper does not want. The involuntary response

of his mind is: "I do not agree to that." Now amid this various mental activity what has become of the spirit of devotion, the earnest feeling of supplication, the real soul of all prayer? It is well nigh strangled in this unhappy conflict of thought. Let us for a moment see how these objections, to an extempora-neous mode of worship are obviated in the use of the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church. When the worshipper enters the Church, he feels that he is entering the house of God. There is to him a sanctity pertaining to it, which does not attach to any other place, since, when once consecrated to the worship of God, it is "separated from all unhallowed, worldly, and common uses."\* He takes off his hat when he enters the door, and he does not put it on until he passes out of the door. He does not do in the house of God, what would be deemed disrespectful in the house of his neighbor. On taking his seat, he bows his head and silently invokes God's blessing. Very soon the minister appears, clad in his clerical robes. But some of my hearers may say, but tell us, what is the authority and utility of clerical vestments? I am happy to answer, for I am here for the purpose of explanation. As to the authority, I have only to say, that God has once, in the Mosaic dispensation, expressed His pleasure in this regard, and He has

\* Office of Consecration.

never annulled that expression of His will. It was in His view fitting, that his ministers should wear a vestment, when officiating at His altar, which they did not wear on any other occasion. The long custom of the Christian Church has sanctioned the use of clerical robes. Although we have no positive law on the subject, yet it is proper that a minister in the House of God, should appear in a habit, which is peculiar to the services of the Sanctuary, and being worn on no other occasions, is identified with the ministerial office. Again: it serves to remove from the minds of the congregation, all occasion for the indulgence of idle and wandering thoughts. It matters not who is to officiate, whether their own Rector or a stranger; there is no temptation to curious speculation as to his appearance, whether well or ill clad, in fashion or out of fashion. All frivolous distinctions of this sort, which serve to distract the attention of the congregation are effectually and happily concealed. In this regard all ministers are on an equality. The mind of the worshipper is at once put to rest, as to the mode of the service, whoever may be the officiating clergyman. His spirit of devotion is exposed to no serious disturbance, as to the matter of the prayers or the manner of conducting the services. The worshipper has nothing to do, but to pour out his heart as best he can in prayer and praise, and devoutly listen to the teachings of the Word of God. It is sometimes

objected that there are many and unmeaning changes of position in our service. It is very true, there are in our mode of worship frequent changes of position. When we pray we *kneel*; when we praise we *stand*; when we listen to the Word we *sit*. Our position is made to conform to the nature of the particular service in which we are engaged. These frequent changes, so far from being objectionable, physically considered are a relief, since they serve to prevent the fatigue which necessarily attends, a long continuance in one position.

As all persons have not a voice to sing, and yet all persons ought to join audibly in some form of praise, the church provides that a portion of the Psalms of David shall be read responsively, by minister and people, morning and evening. A lesson from the Old Testament and one from the New are also read both morning and evening. In addition to these some part of one of the Epistles and a portion of one of the Gospels, together with the Ten Commandments, are read in the morning. There is no service in any part of Christendom, where provision is made for the daily reading of so much Holy Scripture as in the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. At every service we are required to repeat the articles of our belief, in the form of a creed. The church has a **CREED**, because she is the Church. There can be no such thing as a Christian

Church without a Christian creed. There are some persons, I am aware, who affect to have no creed. But Christ has effectually settled the practicability of such a theological anomaly. Nobody can go to heaven without a creed. Creed is belief. Christ has said, "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*"

The services of the church are so arranged that every prominent event in the Savior's life, every cardinal doctrine of the Gospel, are regularly brought to the attention of the congregation throughout the year, so that, if the people are not thoroughly instructed in every part of the Gospel system of salvation, it is their own fault. The church is too good a mother to her children to entrust so vital a matter to the faithfulness of her individual ministers. A minister may be false to his charge—he may swerve from the faith; but however unsound he may be in the pulpit, he is compelled to be *Orthodox* in the reading desk; and when the desk and the pulpit begin to contradict each other, the people will soon discover that something is out of joint, and will take measures to have the unsound member reduced or cut off. "The Church of Christ is the ground and pillar of the truth;" as such, it is, and ever is to be, the great Conservator of the Truth. It is the divinely ordained Guardian of the "Faith once delivered to the Saints." The most effectual instrumentality of doing this office is by means of a liturgy. It is, under God, the great safe-

guard of the people. The devil never shows his marvellous skill more effectually, than when he seeks to undermine the faith of Christians. He rarely, if ever, begins with the laity. He would make but slow headway if he did; for if he succeeded in making an apostate, he would only count one. But if he can poison the mind of a minister, and make a heretic of him, he has seized hold of the long end of a lever, with which he may tip a whole congregation out of the Ark of Salvation. A minister who is not tied to a liturgy will do as much mischief in praying heresy, as he will in preaching it; so that by skilfully conforming his prayers to his preaching, the change is unperceived until it has become so great, that it can no longer be disguised, and then it is too late to avert the consequences.\*

The propriety and necessity of a liturgy have been acknowledged by distinguished non-Episcopal divines. The Presbyterians, in the time of Cromwell, undertook to conduct public worship after an extemporaneous manner; they soon changed their mind, and adopted a form of prayer. The Presbyterians of Scotland, at the Reformation, used a liturgy. Richard Baxter prepared a liturgy, and sought to have it introduced into public use. John Wesley set forth a liturgy for the use of the Methodists in this country.

\* Note II.

John Calvin, at Geneva, composed a liturgy for the Sunday service. Of the excellence of the English Prayer Book, of which our own is almost an exact copy, Dr. Adam Clark, the distinguished Methodist, thus speaks: "It is the greatest effort of the Reformation, next to the translation of the Scriptures into the English language. . . . As a form of devotion it has no equal in any part of the Universal Church of God. . . . Next to the Bible, it is the Book of my understanding, and of my heart." Robert Hall, the eloquent English Baptist, thus speaks of it: "I believe that the evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastened fervor of its devotions, and the majestic simplicity of its language, have combined to place it in the very first rank of uninspired compositions." Dr. Doddridge, the eminent commentator, who was a Congregationalist, thus speaks of it: "The language is so plain as to be level to the capacity of the meanest, and yet the sense is so noble as to raise the capacities of the greatest." These are the voluntary testimonies of a *Methodist*, *Baptist*, and *Congregationalist*, of whom the least that can be said is, that they were the first among their equals. We come now to the consideration of the last of the distinctive principles of the Episcopal Church, which is, its **POLITY**.

IV. The government of the Church is Episcopal because its chief ministers are Bishops, and not be-

cause it is chiefly governed by Bishops. The Bishops in our church have but little ecclesiastical power. Their duty is to ordain Deacons, and in conjunction with the Presbytery, to admit Deacons to the Priesthood,—to consecrate churches,—preside at conventions, and to perform the Apostolic rite of Confirmation, or the laying of hands on baptized persons, who desire to take upon themselves their baptismal vows and thereby make a profession of their faith before the world. This custom, commenced by the Apostles, has been continued in the church from that day to this.\* The government of the church is purely republican. It is strikingly analogous to that of the Municipal, State, and General Government, in this country. I cannot better describe it, than by giving a brief outline of its practical operation. A number of laymen meet together and organize a parish, by the choice of two Wardens and a Board of Vestry-men. To them is committed the management of all the temporal affairs of the parish. The members of the parish choose their own minister. Once a year, on Easter Monday, parish meetings are held for the choice of parish officers, and for the election of delegates to the Diocesan Convention. These lay delegates, with the ministers of the several parishes, meet annually in Convention. The Bishop presides, but has no other voice than that of

\* Note K.

a presiding officer. The clergy and laity assemble together, but form, in fact, two distinct houses; and when it is so required by any delegation, they must vote separately. In such a case there must be a concurrence of both orders, the clerical and the lay. Thus the laity represent the House of Representatives in our State Legislature,— the clergy, the Senate, and the Bishop, the Governor. This Diocesan Convention appoint a Standing Committee, consisting of three laymen, and three clergymen who are a Council of Advice to the Bishop. The Bishop has no right to ordain a Deacon or a Priest until the consent and recommendation of this Committee is first obtained. This Committee answers to the *Governor's Council*. The State, or Diocesan Convention choose four clergymen and four laymen to represent the Diocese, or State, in the General Convention. This General Convention meets once in three years, and consists of like delegations, from every diocese in the Union, where the church has an organization. The Bishops of the church meet by themselves, and answer to the Senate of the United States. The clerical and lay deputies meet together and organize, by choosing one of their number as President. Both laity and clergy commonly vote together; but if the delegation of any diocese require it, the vote must be taken by orders, the clergy and laity voting separately; and there must be a concurrence of both orders, or the vote is not carried.

A measure must have the concurrence of the House of Bishops, before it can become a law. The influence of the laity in the legislation of the church may be seen by this illustration. If a measure should pass the House of Bishops by a unanimous vote, and coming to the lower house, should receive the vote of every clergyman, and then should be lost by one majority on the part of the laity, it could not become a law. Such is the organization of our National Ecclesiastical Congress, which commonly embraces many of the ablest men in the church.

Our polity secures healthful discipline. Every clergyman must belong to some Episcopal jurisdiction. There can be no such thing as an Episcopal clergyman at large. If a stranger present himself to me as a clergyman of the church, the first question is: Where do you belong? He cannot call himself a cosmopolite,—as belonging every where, and having a home nowhere. He must have a canonical, if not a “local habitation.” If he answer: Kansas, Texas, Oregon, or California, I have only to turn to the list of the clergy in that diocese and ascertain the fact.

Our parishes choose their own ministers; but they do not make them, and they cannot unmake them; nor can they retain them after the church has suspended or degraded them. If a clergyman commits a crime, for which he should be displaced from the Ministry, he is tried by an Ecclesiastical Court, and if found guilty

and sentenced to be degraded, that sentence is passed upon him, and he is at once put out of the Ministry, and this fact is forthwith communicated to every diocese in the United States. He cannot henceforth officiate anywhere as an Episcopal clergyman, nor is there any canonical provision for his future restoration to the Ministry. It matters not how influential his parish. They may love him so well as to wink at his crime ; they may be more than willing to forgive ; they may seek to cover up his iniquity, and strive to white-wash the stain of his criminality, but the church stretches out the hand of her discipline, and takes him from these fond admirers, and puts him upon his trial by a court composed of his peers. He has committed an offence against the church, against the cause of Christ, to the scandal of true religion, and the church is bound to protect that religion, by purging herself of a corrupt member.\* His parish is as impotent as is the family of a man, who has committed a high crime and has been arrested by the civil authority. What a contrast between such a discipline and that which obtains in other systems, where a congregation have only to throw their arms around their minister, however corrupt, and he maintains his position as their preacher, to the great reproach of religion. And should he be tried and found guilty, and sentenced to

\* Note L.

degradation from the Ministry, there is no power to execute it; and he may, if he please, go back to his former congregation, if they will have him, or gather a new one, perhaps in the midst of the scene of his iniquity.

Such are some of the distinctive principles of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as seen in its Ministry, Doctrines, Worship, and Polity. I am glad to say, that some of the distinctive *features* of the Episcopal Church are becoming less distinctive. The *features* themselves remain in all their fullness, but they are becoming less and less *distinctive*, in consequence of the happy and very promising changes, which are going on in other religious bodies about us. The time was, when an educated ministry, Gothic church edifices, the use of organs, chanting in public service, the word Church as signifying a place of worship, the term "going to church," observing the festival of Christmas, the decoration of churches with evergreens at that festive season, using a Liturgy, wearing clerical vestments, were *distinctive* features of the Episcopal Church, but they are so no longer. Once, special pains were taken, in the erection of a place of worship to have square windows, and these, in two rows like a dwelling-house,—to secure the severest simplicity in the architecture. These places of worship were called "meeting-houses," and attendance at divine worship was termed "*going to meeting*." It

would be regarded as hardly less than an insult, to apply these terms at the present day. Once, it was considered a sin to have instrumental music in the Sanctuary, while there is now hardly a place of worship, in city or town, that does not have an organ. And it is by no means uncommon to hear the church chants beautifully sung, in the congregations of the various religious bodies. If a stranger were to conclude that every fine gothic edifice he saw now-a-days, was an Episcopal Church, he would make a great mistake. The denominations, who in former days inveighed most strongly against an educated ministry, have now more colleges than the Episcopal Church. The gown is becoming a very common clerical vestment. As to crosses, if we were to place gilt crosses upon our churches, as some of our Congregational brethren are doing, in this good old Puritan State of Massachusetts, we should no doubt be called Puseyites. But crosses will not harm them ; they never harmed us, though their appearance has caused much alarm in times past. The recent introduction of Liturgies into public worship, among several denominations, is one of the most significant signs of an inclination to return to primitive usage. There is one other pleasing and promising evidence of progress in the right direction. It is the fact, that so large a proportion of our clergy are from the various denominations. The late Bishop Griswold stated in 1841, that of two hun-

dred and eighty-five clergymen ordained by him, two hundred and seven of them, came into the ministry of the Episcopal Church, from other denominations. There are at the present time upwards of eighteen hundred clergymen in the Episcopal Church, about twelve hundred of whom, it is estimated, came into the church from other folds. May the change continue to go on, until not only the *features* but the *principles* of the Church shall be less and less *distinctive* ;— until there “shall be but one fold and one shepherd.”

With a ministry so Apostolic, with a Liturgy so evangelical, with a Polity so purely republican, do you wonder, that I am a Churchman, and never can be any thing else? Do you not wonder that you yourselves are not?

But let us never lose sight of the important fact, that the church, and ministry, and worship, are not an *end*, but a *means*. The end is the salvation of the soul, and the glory of God. The conditions of that salvation are, repentance of sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. May God graciously grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may all comply with these conditions and through the merits of Christ’s righteousness, find a place at His right hand, in His Kingdom above, to go no more out forever. Amen.

## NOTES.

NOTE A.—The Puritans of New England held that religious *toleration* was wrong. When they left England for America, it was not for the purpose of maintaining and enjoying the principle of toleration. This point is susceptible of abundant proof; hence their perfect consistency, though great wickedness, in hanging the *Quaker*, banishing the *Baptist*, and imprisoning the *Churchman*. Hutchinson says "that toleration was preached against as a sin in rulers, which would bring down the judgments of Heaven upon the land."—*Hist. I.* 75.

Says Judge Story: "When Sir Richard Saltonstall wrote to them his admirable letter, which pleads with such Catholic enthusiasm for toleration, the harsh and brief reply was: 'God forbid our love for truth should be grown so cold that we should tolerate errors.'—Yes, the very men who asked from Charles the Second, after his restoration, liberty of conscience and worship for themselves, were deaf, and dumb, and blind, when it was demanded by his commissioners for *Episcopalians* and others."—*Story's Misc.* p. 65.

The Puritans felt much aggrieved by the burdens laid upon them in England, for the support of the established church. But as soon as they have a State of their own, they not only join the church to it, but compel *Churchmen* to pay for the support of their *Congregational* worship. The manner of enforcing the collection of this tax is illustrated by a case which occurred in the town of Stratford, Conn. "The Episcopal parish objected to paying taxes to the *Congregationalists*, on the ground that they were legally exempt by the law of England; and upon their refusal, Timothy Titherton, one of the church wardens, and John Marey, one of the vestrymen, were arrested about midnight, Dec. 12, 1780, and compelled to walk eight miles to jail, where they were confined without fire or light until they paid the sums demanded."—*Chapin's Puritanism*, p. 121.

NOTE B.—The Methodists have a Liturgy, in the form of certain offices, which they rarely use. Their Bishops have a degree of ecclesiastic

tical power, which more nearly approaches that of the Bishops of the Church of Rome than any Protestant body of Christians in the world. The people have no voice in the choice of their preachers. The preachers have no voice as to their locality. At the annual conferences, the Bishops assign to each minister his place for the year; and no preacher can remain in one parish more than two years consecutively. The laity have no representation in their conferences, and, therefore, no vote in ecclesiastical legislation. In no Protestant communion are the laity so completely excluded from the management of the general affairs of their church, as among the Methodists.

The evils of this feature of their polity are beginning to be felt. This feeling of dissatisfaction led to a division in 1830. The seceders organized their sect, on the principles of Congregationalism. They have thirteen hundred preachers, and sixty thousand members, and are called *Protestant Methodists*. Another division took place in 1847. This division call themselves the *True Wesleyan Methodist Church*. They have about six hundred preachers and twenty thousand members.

NOTE C.—“Timothy was ordained an Apostle by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul.”—2 Tim. 1. 6.

Some allege that the passage in 1 Tim. iv. 14, refers to Timothy’s ordination. “Eminent authority has declared the word ‘Presbytery’ to mean the *office* to which Timothy was ordained, not the *persons* who ordained him; so that the passage would read, “with the laying on of hands to confer the presbyterate,” or presbytership, or clerical office, in which view the ordainer of Timothy was St. Paul himself, as mentioned in 2 Tim. i. 6.

“Jerome, Ambrose, and other ancients, and Calvin, interpret ‘*presbyterium*,’ in that place, not an assembly, but the office to which Timothy was promoted.” “Should it be said, however, that the word ‘presbyterate, or presbytership,’ proves Timothy to have been then ordained a presbyter merely, we would neutralize that argument by appealing to 1 Thess. ii. 6, (comp. with i. 1,) where he is called an Apostle.”—“*Episcopacy Tested by Scripture*,” pp. 19, 20.

NOTE D.—It has been a law of the church, from the Apostolic age, that the ministerial commission can only come from Christ, through the Apostles, in an unbroken succession. So important did the church consider this to be, that she made a rule, that at every consecration of a Bishop, there should be, at least, three Bishops present and joining in the laying on of hands, so that if, in the course of time, a break should occur in any single line (which has never yet been shown), there are others which still hold good. The burden of proof lies upon those who, denying this Apostolic succession, assert that there has been a break, to show *where* and *when* this break took place.

NOTE E.—*Tertullian*, a Presbyter of Carthage, in the second century, is sometimes quoted as authority against infant baptism. It is true he did oppose infant baptism. But why? Because it was a novelty—because it was not Apostolic? O, no; but because he was a follower of a man by the name of Montanus, who called himself “the *Comforter* promised by Christ to His disciples,” and pretending to be inspired, had the wicked presumption to say that Christ had conceded too much to the weakness of the people, and so had given an imperfect rule of life. Hence Montanus laid down very severe rules of religion, and Tertullian, being naturally an austere man, embraced his sentiments, and became his ablest defender. Among other strange notions indulged by Tertullian, was this: “that sin after baptism could hardly be pardoned.” Hence it was that he argued for the *delay* of the baptism of infants. For the same reason he would have adults of certain dispositions put off the reception of this Sacrament. The very fact of *such* an objection from *such* a man is a strong argument in favor of infant baptism, inasmuch as it shows that, in the second century, infant baptism was practised, and was not objected to because it was an innovation, but because of a heretical notion about sin after baptism.

NOTE F.—“A learned Rabbi tells us that Ezra composed eighteen forms of prayer, which were enjoined by the Great Council, that every man might have them in his mouth;” to which he adds a statement of the custom which prevailed, that the people should say “*Amen.*”—

*Kip's Double Witness.* These eighteen prayers may be found in "Prideaux's Connexions."

In Horne's Introduction, Vol. III., may be found the following extract from the Jewish Liturgy, with which our Savior was familiar, and from which He mainly took the petitions embodied in the form which he gave to his disciples: "Our Father, which art in heaven, be gracious unto us, Oh Lord, our God; hallowed be Thy name, and let the remembrance of Thee be glorified in heaven above, and upon earth here below. Let Thy kingdom reign over us now and forever. The holy men of old said, remit and forgive unto all men, whatsoever they have done against me. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing. For Thine is the kingdom, and Thou shall reign in glory forever, and forevermore."

NOTE G.—Before the Reformation, the Liturgy was only in *Latin*, and was much the same as the present Roman breviary and missal. One of the fruits of the Reformation was the purging of the Liturgy of corrupt innovations, and its translation into English. "Edward VI. appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury, with other learned and discreet Bishops and Divines, to draw an order of divine worship, having respect to the pure religion of Christ, taught in the Scripture, and to the practice of the Primitive Church." It was the wish of Cranmer and his associates to retain whatever was sanctioned by Scripture and primitive usage, and to reject nothing but what savored of superstition or tended to errors in doctrine and worship. Many of the collects retained by them, and which now make a part of our Prayer Book, have been used in the public worship of the church, for fifteen hundred years. The English Prayer Book, substantially as it now is, having been ratified by Convocation and by an Act of Parliament, was used for the first time, by authority, in all the churches on Whit-Sunday, 1549.

The Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States was ratified by the General Convention, in October, 1789, and does not differ essentially from that of the Church of England.

The services for Festivals and Fasts, which are provided in the Prayer Book, are happily adapted to the necessities of our spiritual nature, and

are founded upon the authority of Holy Scripture. Festivals and Fasts were enjoined by God upon the Jews, and were observed by our Lord and His Apostles. Their necessity has been acknowledged by those bodies of Christians who, in their haste to depart, apparently, as far as possible from the church, undertook to do without them. Thus our Puritan Fathers made it penal to observe Christmas, but ordained a Festival in the Autumn, in the form of a *Thanksgiving Day*. They would not keep the fast of Lent, but they set apart a day in the Spring, as a "day of fasting, humiliation and prayer."

The church had, from the early ages, observed a fast of forty days, wherein the ordinary means of grace were used, after an extraordinary manner. Those bodies of Christians who discard this practice, have felt the necessity of such a season, and have virtually confessed it, in that species of substitute found in their "four days meetings" or "protracted meetings," and other extraordinary services, connected commonly, with what are known as modern "revivals." We think their own experience is proving that the "*old paths*" are the better way.

NOTE H.—The office of "the Church of the Living God, as the ground and pillar of the truth," is not only to spread that truth, but to *conserve* it. This, the Protestant Episcopal Church does, not only by retaining an Apostolic ministry, but by embodying the great principles of the Gospel, in an *Evangelical Liturgy*. If the minister go astray and become heretical, he cannot easily carry the people with him. Nor can he continue to preach after he ceases to believe in the Divinity of Christ. He must quit the church at *once* when he quits the faith, since he cannot preach without using the Liturgy, and he cannot do that, after he ceases to believe that Christ is a Divine Being. In this manner are the people protected against the errors, into which their minister may fall.

It has been shown in the sermon that a Liturgy has always obtained in the church, in connection with an Apostolic ministry; that these were universal for fifteen hundred years, and that, at the present day, of the *two hundred millions* of Christians, *one hundred and eighty* retain the three orders of the ministry and a Liturgy. Heresies have appeared from time to time in the church. This was foretold by Christ and the Apos-

ties. Christ promised to be with His Church, and “the gates of hell should not prevail against it.” This promise has been fulfilled:—they have not prevailed against it. It is a remarkable fact, that of the *one hundred and eighty millions* who retain the Apostolic ministry, of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, there is not, to my knowledge, *a single congregation* who deny the Divinity of Christ.

There is another fact in this connection hardly less remarkable. The great work of the Reformation commenced about the same time in England and on the Continent. In England, the Church was content to cut off what was corrupt, to reform what had been abused, and to *preserve* what was believed to be *Apostolic*. The German reformers also cut off what was corrupt, and reformed what had been abused, but they went one step further:—they rejected *Episcopacy*,—because the Church of Rome had made a Pope of the Bishop of Rome, and had otherwise corrupted the three-fold ministry. Here then was a great experiment. Here were two Reformed Churches: the one holding to an Apostolic Ministry, the other rejecting it. In other respects, there was no essential difference between them. Now, after three hundred years, what is the result? There stands the English Church with her twenty thousand Clergymen, and her Missionaries in every land; the very bulwark of Protestant Christendom, maintaining “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

What has become of her who, three hundred years ago, claimed to be a sister, but undertook to put asunder what Apostles had joined together? Where is the faith entrusted to her? She thought it wise to attempt to maintain the Apostolic faith without the Apostolic ministry—thus substituting a plan of her own for the plan of the Apostles; and where is she now, and what does she teach? At the beginning of the present century “a majority of the divines of the German Churches rejected all belief in the Divine Origin of Christianity.” Says an American Traveller:—“The majority of the Professors in the Universities disbelieve the Revelation of the Old Testament, and regard its authority with no more reverence than that of the *Iliad* or *Aenead*.” “The Miracles of the Old, and often those of the New Testament, are explained away in conversation and in their lecture rooms; and the inspi-

ration of the Apostles, and sometimes of Christ, publicly denied." "On the subject of the New Testament, there is also the greatest diversity of opinion, though the majority of the Professors, in every department, unite in disbelieving it." The same writer adds:—"I believe I am within the bounds of truth in asserting, that there are not five Orthodox Professors and Clergymen in Germany, who esteem the Sabbath in any other light than as a Mosaic Institution." Of the *practical* effects of such teaching the reader can judge for himself.—See *Richardson's Reasons—Stewart's Letters to Channing—Dwight's Travels in Germany—Rose's State of Protestantism in Germany—Robinson's Bib. Rep.*, Vol. I.

After the Reformation, in England, another experiment was made. The *Puritans* came forth from the Church of England. They had the Apostolic faith as held by that church. They were at that time truly Orthodox as to the articles of their belief. But they undertook to maintain that faith, without the Apostolic Ministry, and without the aid of a Liturgy. They landed upon these shores and planted the Banner of the Cross in the new world, to be carried forth by an army, without divinely commissioned officers. What has been the result? In about two hundred years the great body of their churches denied "the Lord that bought them." The very Church at Plymouth, which they planted, departed from the faith. There was a time, when there was but a solitary *Congregational* parish, in the city of Boston, that was Orthodox. The very *University* which Pilgrim hands planted, and Pilgrim piety endowed, became the hot-bed of heresy. And where is the Church of England? Just where she was three hundred years ago: firmly holding "the faith once delivered to the saints." I know it is sometimes said, that the King's Chapel, Boston, was the first Episcopal Church which became *Unitarian*. I aver that no Episcopal Church in this country ever did become *Unitarian*. The "King's Chapel" was once an Episcopal Church. When the Revolutionary war broke out, the Minister and many of his people, who were loyalists, left the country. It was used, for a while, by the "Old South" Congregation. The property of the former proprietors, who were loyalists, was confiscated. The pews fell into the hands of other people. After peace was declared, a Mr. Freeman applied to Bishop White for

ordination, at the same time avowing his *Unitarian* sentiments. Bishop White *could* not ordain him, and would not, if he could — because he was a heretic. What did the people do? They had a meeting of the congregation. They set apart and ordained two of their number as Deacons,— who, in their turn, laid their hands upon Mr. Freeman's head, and he then and there, and thereby, becomes *their* minister. He, in his turn, takes the Prayer Book and riddles it of its vitals, and proceeds with his ministrations. Thus it will be seen, that the “King's Chapel” did not become a *Unitarian* place of worship, until it became a CONGREGATIONAL parish. All there is Episcopal about it, are the walls, furniture, and the skeleton of a mutilated Prayer Book.

The Church is the conservator of the “Truth” in another relation. On the opposite side stands the Church of Rome, clothed with great power, and covered with deep corruption. She boasts of her authority — and in a controversy with her, the various denominations invariably come off second best. They unwittingly attack her at a point where she is *strongest*, and they are *weakest*. On the other hand, when she tells us that she has an Apostolic commission from Christ, through His Apostles, we answer: “*So have we.*” And we follow up this answer by saying, that we have every thing that she ever had, in the first three centuries; and the difference between us lies, only in those unscriptural doctrines, and practices, which have been added since. What she holds as articles of faith that we do not, are *heresies*, and we can tell her the time and the place when and where she adopted them. Thus our great advantage in the controversy with Rome, must be manifest to all, who understand what that controversy is.

NOTE I.—Some affirm, that while the Baptists had no organized church until the seventeenth century, yet individuals who held Baptist sentiments were scattered throughout Christendom in early ages, and were known as the Albigenses and Waldenses. The Waldenses were a sect, which appeared in the twelfth century and had a ministry of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.*

NOTE K.—By confirmation we mean the rite of laying on of hands upon the heads of those who have been baptized, and which is represented by St. Paul as “a principle of the doctrine of Christ.”—*Heb. vi. 2.*

When Philip went down to Samaria and preached, many believed, and were baptized by him. As soon as the Apostles at Jerusalem heard of this event, Peter and John went to Samaria, and laid their hands upon these baptized persons.—*Acts, viii. 15-17.* So also at Ephesus, St. Paul laid his hands on those who had been baptized.—*Acts, xix. 6.*

In the Apostolic age the rite was usually denominated “the laying on of hands;” it is now commonly termed “confirmation,” inasmuch as the person who receives this laying on of hands, thereby ratifies and confirms his baptismal vows. It is a profession of his faith before the world. The propriety of such a ceremony must be apparent. That it is Apostolic, there is no dispute. Of its fitness and profit, there are multitudes of witnesses. As none but Apostles performed this rite, so its administration is restricted to their successors, the Bishops of the church. Calvin himself acknowledged that it was practised by the Apostles. In his fourth book of Institutes he says: “It was an ancient custom, that the children of Christian parents, when they were grown up, should be presented to the Bishop to do that office, which was required of persons who were baptized at adult age.” . . . . “Such an imposition of hands as this, which is used purely as a blessing, I very much approve of, and wish it were now restored to its pure and primitive uses.”

The following testimony is an extract from the “report of a committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church.” “It appears,” say they, “that a rite called confirmation was administered by the imposition of the hand of the minister, or bishop, or elder, together with prayer, on baptized children at a certain age.” And after quoting the authority of Calvin and others, the committee add: “This rite of confirmation, thus administered to baptized children when arrived to competent years, and previously instructed and prepared for it, with the express view of their admission to the Lord’s Supper, shows clearly that the primitive church, in her purest days, exercised the authority of a mother over her baptized children.”—*Bishop Hobart’s Tract on Confirmation.* In the Episcopal

Church the candidate for baptism, (if an adult,) for confirmation and the Lord's Supper, is examined by the minister, and by him admitted to these privileges, if, in his opinion, the candidate be a proper subject for them. The "keys" were committed to the Apostle, and not to the people. The commission from Christ authorizes and directs his minister to baptize, and no earthly power can interpose in this matter: A minister has no moral right to allow laymen to say whom he shall baptize and admit to the Lord's Supper, and whom he shall not. Sheep are not, commonly, shepherds.

NOTE L.—Any person in this diocese may prefer a complaint against a clergyman to the Standing Committee of the diocese, who, after having made a preliminary examination, may, at their discretion, present such clergyman to the Bishop for trial, in which case they are required to make charges and specifications in writing, in the form of a presentment, which presentment is sent to the Bishop, who is required to serve a copy of the same on the accused, with a list of nine Presbyters, from which the accused shall select five, and return the same to the Bishop. The court thus constituted meet at such time and place as the Bishop may appoint. The court declare their decision in writing, together with the sentence, if the accused be found guilty. The sentence is pronounced publicly by the Bishop, in some church, in the presence of three Presbyters. If the sentence be deposition from the ministry, it is immediately communicated to the Bishops of the several dioceses.

NOTE M.—John Calvin, who was the father of Presbyterianism, was not a Presbyterian from *choice*, but from what he regarded as a necessity. Here are his views of Episcopacy: "The Episcopate itself had its appointments from God. The office of a Bishop was instituted by the authority and defined by the Ordinance of God."

"Let them give us such an hierarchy, in which the Bishops may so bear rule that they refuse not to submit to Christ, and to depend upon Him as their only Head: let them be so united together in a brotherly concord, as that his truth shall be their only bond of union; then, in-

deed, if there shall be any who will not reverence them, and pay them the most exact obedience, there is no anathema, but I confess them worthy of it." — *See "Reasons," etc., by Richardson.*

John Calvin not only thus sanctioned Episcopacy, but desired to be consecrated a Bishop.

Says Archbishop Abbott: "Perusing some papers of our predecessor, Matthew Parker (Archbishop), we find that John Calvin and others, of the Protestant churches of Germany, and elsewhere, would have had Episcopacy, if permitted, but could not upon several accounts."

It appears that Calvin sent letters, in King Edward VI. reign, inviting a conference with the clergy on this subject, which letters were intercepted by Gardiner and Bonner, two Romish Bishops, and they never reached their destination. Calvin received an answer purporting to be from the reformed divines, declining his overtures. In the sixth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign these letters were discovered, but Calvin was then dead.

Philip Melanethon, a Presbyterian, one of the most distinguished of the Continental Reformers, thus speaks of Episcopacy: "I would to God it lay in me to restore the government of Bishops. For I see what manner of church we shall have, the Ecclesiastical polity being dissolved. I do see that, hereafter, there will grow up a greater tyranny in the church than there ever was before."

NOTE N. — *Congregational Ordination.* That laymen can make a minister of God, but putting their hands on his head, is a doctrine which may startle Congregationalists, who never were told that this is a principle of Congregationalism. So much of a principle did the Puritans of New England make *lay* ordination, that they even required laymen to lay their hands in ordination upon the head of a regularly ordained minister of the Church of England, when he desired to enter their ministry — as in the case of Mr. Francis Higginson, who was ordained at Salem, July 20, 1629. Mr. H., who was a minister in the Church of England, acting in the capacity of a layman, "with three or four more of the gravest members of the church, laid their hands on Mr. Skelton, using prayers

therewith." Then Mr. Skelton, with the same "present and assisting" peers, performed the same kind office for Mr. Higginson. And thus says a witness of the scene: "I hope you, and the rest of God's people with you, will say that here was a right foundation laid, and that these two blessed servants of the Lord, came in at the door, and not at the window." — *Felt's Annals of Salem*, p. 28. For other instances of Lay Ordination, see Note 83, p. 490, Coit's Puritanism.

"All Congregational ordinations are virtually laical; for, as the *first* were so, all the rest must be."

## SIXTH LECTURE.

BY

REV. ORVILLE DEWEY, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY AT CHURCH GREEN,  
SUMMER STREET.

(11. — )

291



## VI.

### WHY I AM A UNITARIAN.

---

MATTHEW XXII. 35—40.—THEN ONE OF THEM, WHO WAS A LAWYER ASKED HIM A QUESTION, TEMPTING HIM, AND SAYING, MASTER, WHICH IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT OF THE LAW? AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD, WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND. THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT; THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF. ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

THESE were not only comprehensive and final words from the Master, upon the nature of religion, but for the time, nay and for all time, they are very significant words. They swept down all Jewish subtlety and questioning, and a great deal beside. Of mint, annis, and cummin, how much; the resurrection-wife, whose she should be, of the seven that had her; tribute to Cæsar, to be paid or no: and in later days, the hypostases, how related, how mingled, homoousian, or homoiou-sian; human ability, whether natural or moral; decrees, election with or without foresight of good works; theologic fogs rising from Dort or Augsburg—all fly like unsubstantial mists over the solid earth; *here is*

the ground beneath — the solid ground of all truth and doctrine. No matter what the Mischna and Gemara say — no matter what Hillel or Shammai says — no matter what Luther or Calvin or Arminius, or Straus or Rongè says to disturb my mind, they cannot shake this foundation. Nay, Rongè? I am disposed to recall that instance — where is Rongè? *He* set up the love-principle — not faith, but love; nay, that faith *is* love, was *his* principle; the most notable thing, and the most notable reform it would have made, that has appeared in these latter days. And this is one reason I will add in passing, why I prefer my own system of religious thought to any other; because, as it seems to me, it sets up more clearly — more free from all doctrinal entanglement than any other system, this principle of love — love to God and love to man, as the ground and basis, the sum and substance of all religion.

This, however, is but on the threshold of the question proposed in this series of discourses; in which each one of five or six denominations — or some person answering for it — undertakes to speak of itself; to speak of its faith, order and discipline; and to say why it prefers its own to any other. Now that a system is *true*, or appears to be true, is the main and sufficient reason, with any thoughtful person, why he prefers it. But I understand that the answer here, is expected to turn upon practical issues. What is there

in the *devout* and *humane* feelings that a man cherishes, which makes his system of faith and church order attractive to him? Religion is summed up by the Master in these two precepts: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Why, and wherein, to the love of God and man, is this or that system interesting?

It is an important question; for there is a close connection between theology and religion. This is often denied, I know; but I cannot agree with the denial. Says the Poet —

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

There is a sense indeed, in which this is true; though not the sense, I think, in which the poet meant it. That is to say — he whose life — i. e., whose inward and outward life is right, believes all that is essential. It is in this view, that I have just pointed to the great and palpable foundations of all religion. But still, a man's ideas of God, of Christ, of the Gospel, of human nature, and of the principles of human culture and welfare, have a great deal to do with his piety, his humanity, his essential happiness. I only lay down this as a general observation, at present; and expect it to appear more fully, as we go on.

But before I proceed to the main points which I

propose to consider, I will say a word or two of certain matters of form and circumstance, which have been very naturally brought into this discussion.

One is that of Church Order; whether it shall seem preferable that the church be governed or presided over by Bishops, by Presbyters, by Assemblies, Synods, Conferences, or *not*. Now, while I do not think that *any* form or mode of hierarchy is laid down in the New Testament, I prefer the Congregational order. And I prefer it, for the same general reason that leads me to prefer the Republican system in politics, *viz.*, that it gives me freedom. In religion, *more* than in politics, I seek for freedom. The State may, with more reason, demand conformity. It cannot exist without a certain amount of conformity. And the requisition presses mostly, too, upon the outward life. I might live, all my life, under a despotism, and never, perhaps, be obliged to say, that I believed what I did not believe; or to lose my life, or property, or reputation, if I did not. But religion is a thought, a feeling, a communion with the Infinite, a stretching onward to immortality; and nothing is so painful to it as any fetter or chain. To have pontiff, or prelate, or presbytery, or creed, stand before me and say—"thus far; no farther, at your peril!"—I could bear any thing better than that. And I had rather take the worst possible church organization with freedom, than the best possible—if such a thing could be—with out it.

"Ah!" it may be said, "freedom is a fine thing to talk about; but who has it? Who *is* there that thinks what he will? or that can diverge very widely from those around him, without suffering for it?" Grant that *nobody* has it perfectly. Grant that opinion presses upon the world like the atmosphere; and nobody can get out of it. That is no reason why I should not have all the freedom that I can.

And I must have it; my mind cannot advance without it. It is the very condition of progress; and yet more, it is the inborn right of my intellect, to think freely. To put me in a theological inclosure, with a fence, five bars or thirty-nine bars high, and then to say, "you must not pass this fence, and you must not pull out one of those bars!"—I would as soon consent that thirty-nine propositions, or a whole catechism of articles in *science* should be laid before me, to bound or to shape my inquiries. Indeed it would be more intolerable in theology than in physics. No, I must have freedom. In religion, above all, I must have freedom.

Another topic which has been brought into this discussion, is *success*. It is said, that Unitarianism does not spread like other systems. Very imposing statistics can be presented, for instance, of the progress of Methodism. I am glad there can be. I rejoice at the work which Methodism has done. I like its practical and affectionate spirit. I have attended a Methodist

Church myself, for two years, in my country home, and there had the happiness to know its pastor, and to call my friend, one of the most thoughtful, reverent, and true men that I have ever known in any church.\* Let Methodism prosper then; let every good work prosper.

And yet there are one or two observations which I desire to submit, on this subject of success. In the first place, the views substantially which we embrace *do* prevail extensively under other names than our own. In the large and increasing Bodies of the Universalists and Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity is distinctly rejected; and so, generally speaking, are its kindred or associated doctrines. And our three denominations together may not be less in *numbers* than the Methodist body itself. In the next place, let me observe, there is a difference between the spread of a *sect*, and the spread

\* The Rev. Thomas Randolph Mercein. I hope I may be pardoned this affectionate allusion to the memory of Mercein, in a series of discourses designed to bring out the points of union and sympathy between different classes of Christians. I never knew a young man more fitted by natural endowments and spiritual gifts, for the holy office he took upon him. He began to preach, very young—at 19, and died at 31. His remains rest in the cemetery at Sheffield, and ought to have a monument. Beautiful in person, simple in manners, strong in purpose, and indefatigable in labor, in him were combined manliness, earnestness and delicacy, with great strength and beauty of intellect. His work on “Natural Goodness” shows what he was. I do not agree with his conclusion; but to the originality, insight, eloquence, and generosity of his writing, no one can refuse his testimony.

of *ideas*. In this latter sphere of success we claim that we have done some work, and that we have not labored in vain. The body of Christians distinctively known as Unitarians, is a small body; and if there is no success but what depends on worldly combination, organization or policy, never had any men less chance of it than we. Bound by no convention but mutual respect and good will, by no creed but the Gospel; thinking and saying, each one what he will; questioning ourselves and our movement, more sharply than if it had taken place on the other side of the world; in our churches perfectly independent; in our conventions more than independent—even litigiously bent on finding all the fault we can with ourselves, spying out defects and criticising tendencies recklessly, as those only can who believe in immortal truth—certainly, we are the least politic of all people. The by-standers looking on, say, “see this little Unitarian body dissolving and all going to pieces before our eyes; why, they don’t believe in *themselves*; they believe in *nothing* but truth.” Nevertheless, here we stand, “as chastened, and not killed; as dying, and behold, we live; as unknown, and yet well known;” here we stand, this “forlorn hope,” if it shall please any to have it seem so to them; *I* say rather—for if they give me *their* thought, I must man myself up, though against all modesty, to give them *mine*—*I* say rather, this vanguard in the great army of Christian progress; and if

this vanguard must sink, either merged in the army that it has led on, or dying at its post, I shall not be sorry for the humble part I have taken in the conflict. For ideas never die! The breath goes out of a man's body, and it is dead; synods and councils of mighty men are dissolved and scattered; churches and hierarchies decline and crumble to pieces; but ideas never die! And if I worshipped *success*, which I do not—if I were governed by mere worldly policy, I believe that there is a wide and onward sweep of thought in the very direction in which I am going—of thought in literature, in science, in philosophy, in the deepest meditations of the most enlightened men in all Protestant countries; and I had rather cast myself upon the tide, restless, fluctuating, even dangerous, that will bear me to some far, bright haven, than to be anchored or stranded, in temporary security, upon the shore.

But it is time that I should pass from the scaffolding and the outworks of religion, about which I am less concerned, to the temple itself. I am asked what there is in the views which I, as a Unitarian, entertain of religion, which makes them interesting to my devotional and humane sentiments; or, if you please, which makes them seem to me favorable and fostering to piety and virtue, to the love of God and man.

First, I am to speak — with awe let me say it—I am to speak of God. I am forced, by the question, upon this awful theme; and yet I cannot bear to

speak of it in any way of debate. Rather in terms like those of Milton's invocation *would* I speak, and say,

“ Hail ! holy Light ! offspring of heaven first born,  
Or of the eternal, co-eternal beam ;  
May I express Thee unblamed ; since God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light,  
Dwelt from eternity ; dwelt then in Thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.”

What thoughts are ours, when that great, that greatest possible Idea enters our minds ! Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain it ; how much less an earthly temple ! Upward, and outward, and onward — and onward, our minds rise, and range abroad, and find no end. This assembly is naught, this world is naught ; the plane of the starry spheres is passed over as but a paved court ; a thousand suns grow dim and are left far behind ; infinitude, eternity, omnipotence, are in our thought ; and they are all concentrated in one Being. That Being, so transcending all comprehension, all imagining — that Being who has given existence to every leaf and every leafy fibre in the spreading forests that engirdle the world, and to every insect that lights upon them, and to every bird that sings among the branches, and to every beast and creeping thing beneath — that Being, who has made mighty suns and stars more numerous than the forest leaves, and has filled them all with light and life, and who knows at this instant the mil-

lion-fold events and actions and minds of million-fold worlds—what soul does not sink into awe and wonder and delight at the thought of such a Being? That mine eyes are opened to beautiful visions, and mine ears to lovely sounds; that I see the heavens and the earth, and the human face divine—speak not of it *now*; I have heard of something *greater*, and mine ear hath comprehended a little thereof; I have heard of One, in whom all life, light, beauty, blessing, goodness and loveliness are summed up in infinite fulness, and from whom they all flow forth in boundless diversity, and blessing, and beatitude!

Now, it is the charm of my contemplation of this Infinite Being, that it runs free, and far and wide from all theological direction. I mean theological in the scholastic sense; for Theology, in its true definition, is the divinest of all sciences. I am left to think of God, without attempting to define the mode of his existence; no scholastic Trinity perplexes my thoughts; no scheme of salvation, in which different persons take a part; no question, *which* I shall worship—whether I shall worship one rather than another, or how I shall worship all. God, in the infinite sublimity and loveliness of his nature, I am left to think upon. But I know that he is my Father; I sink down into that. Amidst all my struggles to comprehend Him, faint, exhausted, overwhelmed, I sink into that. I become a child, and say, “my Father.”

Philosopher, logician, theologian, I am not, in this contemplation, but a child,— and I sometimes think this simple reliance as precious to a speculative as it was to a superstitious age,— but a child, I say, knowing that the infinite love embosoms me, knowing that it cares for me and pities me, and will save me from every ill, if I confide in it.

But when I speak the word, Father, all depends upon the meaning which I attach to it. To *say* that a being, any being, is *good*, does not suffice for a conception of his character; we ask what he does, or what actions are ascribed to him. What is the true *idea* of a *good father*? The meaning of the phrase, applied to God, depends on analogy; and in the construction of it, we may lean too far doubtless, either to lenity or severity. Certainly a good father requires obedience, and punishes for disobedience. So, we believe, does the Infinite Father. But suppose that an earthly parent could so ordain, as to bring his children into the world, *cripples*, or suppose they chance to be born such, and *then* that he exacts full service from them, and inflicts cruel stripes upon them every day for failure: would the common sense of the world hesitate what character to ascribe to that proceeding; or would any vocabulary of human speech be strong enough to set forth the common indignation against it? You could not *live*, in a village where such a thing was done. Such a *thing*

could not *live* in the world — full as it is, of tolerated horrors.

But how feebly does such an instance set forth the case in question! Almighty God has brought into the world, this race of human beings. He has placed, or laid, or left them — such is the popular theory — under a condition, either of impotence or natural depravity, which makes their perdition certain and inevitable without his interference. For millions unnumbered, he does *not*, he never *will* interfere. And every day, by thousands, they drop — from the green and flowery plain of the world, where they had idled or toiled away their little hour's existence, — they drop into everlasting burnings, or into everlasting agonies. Nay, millions of heathens, who never heard of the Gospel, — Asiatic, Egyptian, African crowds and crowding generations, from the begining of time, as they dropped from this bright world, have been heaped up, age after age, in awful aggregation, thousands of millions in each century, upon this burning altar of endless pain!

We speak of this, in sober and solemn words; yet is it any thing but one of the horrors of a poetic imagination? Hildebrand, before he was Pope, Gregory VII., was a preacher. Preaching one day in Arezzo, he drew a picture of hell — he or some one else had had such vision — in which he saw something like a pole or mast rising out of the fiery flood, and on it

a human form which he recognized, as that of a German baron lately deceased; and what surprised him, a man of excellent character. On enquiring the reason of this, he was told that his ancestor eight generations before, had despoiled a convent or abbey of its lands; and that for this offence, he and his eight successors, nine in all, were doomed thus to sink into the fiery abyss. It has been thought that Dante drew from this, his idea of the nine circles in hell. It *was*, indeed, but a poetic fiction. Can the popular creed of to day be any other?

But this is far off. Bring it nigh then. You are a father. An infant being is laid in your arms. It was born in the morning, and died at evening. For that day's life, do you believe—its unhappy fate linked to Adam, and settled by the *fiat* of election—that it must meet the eternal doom? You will say “no,” perhaps; “responsibility does not begin so soon.” When, then, *does* it begin? Is it at two years old, or five, or ten? Fix any time, or let the time be when it will. The day has come; and now and henceforth, it must answer to the everlasting future: nay, and eternity may depend on the probation of an hour. For in an hour it may die; or in a week, or a month, it may die. This is no imagination; alas! it is reality. And your lovely child that is taken from you—you cannot say, perhaps, that

it was a Christian—a regenerate soul. Passions were breaking out from time to time, which had been nursed in infancy, and which it had not learned to control. It was lovely perhaps, and full of promise; but you could not say, that in it yet appeared, the character, conversion or hope of a Christian. But it is gone; the Infinite Father has taken it; and what has he done to it? Cast that frail and tender life, for its week's or month's probation, into outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever? For that week's or month's experience—ignorant, unconscious, unknowing of the unutterable peril—cast that poor child, torn trembling from its mother's arms, upon a doom, upon a misery that is to grow and increase forever and ever,—upon a misery that shall swell to a greater amount in eternity, than all the accumulated miseries of this world in time? There is not a parent's heart in this assembly, that would not break at the thought, if it were brought home to it. And may not *that* interpret something of the Infinite Parent's pity for his children? And I say if you cannot believe that a month's probation, neither can you believe that this weak, frail, ignorant, troubled, human *life*, must draw after it such an irreversible doom. At any rate, this dreadful doctrine of everlasting punishment for all unregenerate souls, falls when tried upon that issue. If you can-

not believe that a month's probation carries with it such an awful doom—if you give up *that*, you give up the doctrine entirely.

Let us now turn to the other subject which I proposed mainly to consider—humanity—man.

There is one thing, and only one, which, for every human being, is true welfare, power, peace, blessing, beatitude. It is rectitude, it is sanctity, it is love—love of God and man. What relation has human nature to this—the great end of being? It is, in the common account, a relation of inefficiency, of inaptitude, of total aversion, of total estrangement, of blank discouragement to all rational hope, of barren soil to all natural culture. What is the practical consequence? A general and fatal inactivity, if not indifference, with regard to the highest thing. There it is—it is called religion—there it is, high up and out of reach; man cannot attain to it; some time, perhaps, it will be brought down to him by a power divine; but for the present, there is a great gulf fixed between him and it. Between humanity and religion, in short, there is no kindly relation, no uniting bond, no natural sympathy.

Now, how did Jesus look upon this human world? We can judge best of what any one thinks of others by his manner of treating them, by the motives and appeals he addresses to them. Now there is a distinction observable in our Savior's manner of speaking to men, which I do not remember to have seen noticed.

To certain classes of persons he spoke with great severity — to the hypocritical Pharisee, to the proud pretender to superior virtue, to unrighteous spiritual oppressors of the people. But to men generally, and even to the poor and degraded, he spoke in a different tone — with tenderness, with sympathy. He addressed them, as if there was something right in them — something at least that would respond to the touches of right sentiment. He said, “love God; love your brethren: God is your father.” He addressed to them the loftiest and most heroic motives. He did not speak to them as mean and base creatures, but as to those who had better thoughts, and were capable of better things. In no assembly of heroes and martyrs could ever be heard nobler appeals than these, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.” And this was not addressed to the disciples alone; for although the disciples gathered around him as he sat on the mountain-side, others came also; and it is said at the close, that the people were astonished — or as it would be better rendered — the multitude were struck with admiration at his doctrine. On another occasion, after he had poured out reproaches upon those who sat in Moses’ seat, saying, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” he turns with infinite tenderness to his people, and says, “O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I

have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Nothing can be more touching, nor, in this view, more significant, than his treatment of the young man, who came to him, kneeling and saying, Master, what good thing shall I do? He was not a disciple of Christ; he was not regenerate, in our modern sense; he was like many others; he was a type of *human kind*, with its good ideals, and the will too weak to carry them out. Jesus says to him, "thou knowest the commandments." "O yes, I know them," is the reply; "I have kept them from my youth." The Master does not reproach him — does not deny his claim. Well nurtured, trained in religion, outwardly blameless, free from base vices, aspiring to something higher, Jesus looked upon him, and his heart was touched; "he looked upon him and loved him." And yet he said, with great tenderness, I do not doubt, he said — "One thing thou lackest; if thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor; and come, follow me."

O folding arm of the heavenly shepherd! why do those thou lovest and longest for, wander from thee? Why, upon the bare mountains, and in miry ways do they wander? Why do our children, the young of the flock, stray away into the world, and forget the lowly roof that sheltered them, and the lowly prayer beneath it? When thou, good shepherd, art ready to take them to thy heart; when thou lookest on them

and lovest them, and wouldst hold them by the hand, and lead them in the way,—why do they wander?

Because — for one reason — they are told they do not belong to the flock. Because they are told that they have no part nor lot in the great inheritance of God's children. Because they are brought up to think religion as far from them as heaven is from earth.

If this is true, we must submit to it, and sink down beneath the awful dispensation — our hands inactive, our heads bowed in the dust — and can only say, “come, O wind from heaven, and blow upon us and breathe life into us.” If it is not true, if religion is made for man and man for religion, if there is a dear affinity between the human soul and things holy, however alas! marred and weakened, then in heaven's name and in the name of humanity, let us arouse ourselves to the one and only work that demands our utmost care; let us study and strive to be true and pure, just as we strive and study to be wise and learned; “let us labor,” as one has said, “as if we could do every thing, and pray as if we could do nothing;” and let us train up our children in this way in which they should go, believing that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

The difference in the views of human nature here stated, is most vital to its treatment, culture and hope, and, as a lover of my kind, I cannot hesitate which to adopt. I love my theology because it is a loving the-

ology ; because it allows me to be a loving and sympathising man, and does not require me forever to fight and brow-beat this great and sacred humanity—God's highest work on earth. I am not preacher, when I preach. I sit in the pews. I would rather speak from that level. And when sitting there in imagination, I lift my eyes to him that stands above, I am sometimes tempted to say, “ O good sir, take some human thought of us ; we are weak and erring enough, God knows ; we are full of faults, and they are sad to think of ; we are weary and want rest ; we are struggling, and would find peace within — God's peace and blessing ; help us then, and do not be hard with us ; if you are perfect as he was who spake to the young man in the Gospel, then speak to us with his love and tenderness and respect ; and if you are not, but are like one of us, then speak to us with the sympathy of a brother-heart.”

What I am saying—with some liberty of manner—is, that I would take my place *within* the circle and bosom of humanity ; and that is where I do not think that the scholastic theology does take its place. I know that man is capable of being very bad. I think of that, it may be, as much as another. But I do not say, it is just what we might expect of him. I do not eagerly and gratifiedly adduce it as an argument for his utter depravity. No, with indignation I look upon it — with sorrow and wonder. I say, how

*can* such a being as man is, be so cruel, hard, intolerant—a tyrant, a persecutor, a brute, a demon.

And yet who, after all, *is* altogether a brute or a demon? It is a rule of dramatic writing, whose business it is to draw the human character to the very life, that no human being is ever truly represented, without a *mixture* of good and evil in him. If this is true, why should it not be equally a truth for theology?

No; man is not an angel, nor is he a demon. Awful powers are struggling within him—conscience on the one hand, and passion on the other—and never but in the ascendancy of conscience over passion, can he find peace—never! Even old Boethius, pagan as he was, might teach us better than many, under Christian nurture, seem to know, though one cannot believe but that he *must* have read the Christian books. When he comes, in his work, on “Consolation,” to the last dread question which touches and troubles the problem of human life, “why are the bad so often fortunate and happy, and the good, unfortunate and miserable? why the bad crowned, and the good martyred? why is vice triumphant, and virtue crushed in the dust beneath it?” bravely he answers, “no, it is not so; true power belongs to the good, real weakness to the bad; vice is never unchastised, and virtue never without recompense; good men are always essentially happy, and bad men are always really miserable.” *That* is true; and all that

is necessary is, more sharply to define it, and to say—the effect of evil, just so far as it prevails in any mind, is to make it unhappy, and the effect of good, in the same proportion, is to make the mind happy. And what a nature is it, of which that is true? What a struggle must there be in the deeps of such a nature to be looked at, with infinite concern and sympathy? Nay, what a nature is that which speaks out, I am sure, in many here, and now, and says—there is something *better* than to be happy; there is something *worse* than to be unhappy. What a divine law is *that*, to be graven deep upon our being! And what vindication is it, of the nobler idea of humanity, when a man stands up erect and free from every stooping baseness and vileness, and says, “I feel *now* that I am *a man!*” Against the whole tide of any theology, or prejudice, or obloquy that beats, with undistinguishing hostility upon all that is human, I do not fear to take up that word, and to say to every man, that would throw off the trammels of any vice or vanity or worldliness, of any godless impiety or profane and debauching vileness—to say to him, “rise up, and be a man!”

But after all, there may be some here who still have questions in their minds; who ask, perhaps, how all this applies to the great subject of what we call man's salvation; how it *is* that man is to become man; how

it is that man is to become regenerate and pure; and what is the help that the Christ offers him to this end.

In the first place then, I must say that my idea of religion is very inadequately, very poorly set forth by the word "salvation." In its present and popular use it does not mean precisely what it did in the first age. When the Gospel was preached to Pagans and Jews, to men lying under the bondage of religious ceremonial or superstitious fear, it *was* deliverance, it was "*salvation*" that was preached. And still, doubtless, there is a sense in which the same word may be justly used. But for us *now*, as we do, constantly to represent the entire work of spiritual regeneration and growth, as a salvation, as an escape from sin and wrath, is, as I view it, to narrow the whole subject. Is it not more? Is it not to put a selfish element into the innermost life of sanctity and virtue? He who flies, does it from fear; and I know no passion that I less desire to be moved by than the passion of fear. It must have its place; but to give it the first place, to put it foremost in the battle for virtue and purity, is to deny to the noblest endeavor on earth its proper grandeur and beauty. We have indeed to fight spiritual foes; but what would be thought of it, if it were to be said to combatants for their country—*not* "strike for your altars and your fires;" but "strike doughtily at your foes, for if you do not kill them, they will kill you;" or worse, to say, "strike not at all, but flee for your

lives to some place of *safety*." Is safety *all*—is it *chiefly*, what we are to seek in religion?

I know that for man, weak, sick at heart, wandering and in peril, salvation is needful; it is the fit word for his case in certain respects; but it does not cover the whole ground as it is commonly and technically made to do. I may be reminded too, that Jesus is called our Saviour in the New Testament—that Jesus means Saviour; but I must still desire you to observe that that name does not usurp the whole idea of him in the Gospel. Rather does it hold that place in the record which fear should hold in our religion. The phrase "the Saviour," or "our Saviour," is used, I think, but fifteen times in the New Testament; while several hundred times Jesus is called the Christ.

But this leads me, in the next place, to a further observation; and that is upon the place which Jesus Christ actually holds in our regeneration, in our spiritual life. On this subject, I must be permitted to express my conviction, that there has been a morbid exaggeration, almost from the beginning. We have departed, I believe, from the original simplicity of the Gospel. The superstition of the dark ages; the desire, *always* and *naturally* felt, to exalt the mercy of God in his greatest, "his unspeakable gift" to the world; and the vying of Christian sects to honor their Common Head, have led to a manner of speaking of Christ which I believe he himself would have forbidden—

which, virtually, I think, He has forbidden. “Why callest thou me good?” he says, “there is none good but one, that is God.” That absolute supremacy of the one Infinite Being,—always he held it clear and high in his teachings. “I can of mine own self do nothing; I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father.” And when about to depart, he says, “go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God.” It is not that there is among Christians too much of a reverent and affectionate veneration for Christ—no, nor the hundredth part enough; but it is a certain theological mysticism and exaggeration of which I complain. When it is said or implied that the love of Jesus is the highest type of religious experience; when, to gather all our thoughts and hopes and reliances about him, is represented as the best guaranty for the true experience, I am constrained by my allegiance to the Highest—nay, by my allegiance to the Master himself, to say, no; **God is all in all, to me.** I sink into the bosom of the Infinite Goodness; that *is* the Infinite to *me*; and Jesus is the blessed Minister and Mediator who has “brought me nigh” to it. We have departed, I must venture to say and repeat, from the simplicity of the Gospel and its first teachers. The dying man in these

days is thought to give the most hopeful sign when he says, "Nothing but Christ; nothing but Christ; I have done nothing; I am nothing; *all* my reliance is upon *him*;" but what said Paul, when he was ready to be offered? "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me in that day."

But what then, *has* Christ done for us? What *is* he to us? And what do we *mean* when we pray in his name?

Jesus Christ is our Master, our spiritual Lord, our Saviour; the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person; Immanuel—God with us. He has spoken to us as man never spake; he has lived as never man lived; he died as never man died. Nothing so perfect was ever in the world before, or beside. All the Christian ages, all Christian hearts, attest that never else has there been such a mission of power and light and life to the world as this "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." And wherein lay its power? In unveiling to us the love and loveliness of the Divine Nature; in teaching us and making us feel that God is our Father: in assuring us by every word and by every suffering of the holy, the anointed One, of God's mercy, of his pity, of his willingness to forgive. And when we pray in

the name of Christ, we pray in the name, i. e., in the acknowledgement of that mercy, which he has taught and brought to us—in reliance upon it. When we end our prayers by saying, “through Jesus Christ,” it is, not as if there was no other manifestation of the infinite mercy, but in confession and attestation of this—of Christ’s teaching and living and dying as the chiefest sign and seal of God’s mercy.

Jesus spoke, appealed, addressed himself, to men. To what in them did he speak? To the sense of right, of truth, of religion; else he could not have spoken to them at all. There *is* a religion in humanity; there *was*, before Christ came. And if we say, or imply in what we say, that there is no religion in the world, but what comes through him, we say what is not true—what the very conditions implied in one man’s speaking to another, show not to be true—what the Apostle declares not to be true, when he speaks of those who “by *nature* do the things contained in the Law.” No, Jesus spoke to the awful conscience in man; to the recognition of God, every where prevailing; to the everlasting sense of duty. Such winning, such tender, pitying, sympathizing—I will even say, such respectful speech, man had never heard before. Sunk in ignorance, toil and contempt, the mass of men lay; and no man cared for their souls. By the loveliness of his life, by the sweetness of his entreaty, by the patience of his endurance, by

the tenderness of his accents, he would raise them up. From all their weary wanderings in sin and sorrow, he called them back and said, "come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke which is easy, and my burthen which is light; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

And now, what especially did he say? What did he require? Repentance, faith — faith in God's mercy — faith in himself, as the messenger and mediator through whom it came — a new heart and a new life. All this is what we now mean by conversion, by regeneration. And what is regeneration? Man is born once physically; he must be born again spiritually. This spiritual life should begin with his first moral consciousness, and should go on and be developed more and more through his whole earthly course. It should not be put off till twenty, thirty, or forty years of age, then to form a crisis in life. If it is put off — as, alas! it too commonly is — then, by all the sacred interests of our being, *let* there be a crisis! But how monstrous is it to say and settle it with ourselves, that our children are to be left to go on for years in sin, in estrangement from religion and from God, and then, perchance, to be brought into the fold. No; "train up a child in the way in which he should go." Let parents win him by the loveliness of their example, by the tenderness of their prayers, by the habit of revering and speaking of all things

sacred and good, by the very atmosphere of truth, gentleness, and piety, in which they live. It will do more than a thousand catechisms. The catechisms may be very well, and Sunday Schools may be very well, to teach the *facts* of religion; but beware, men and brethren! beware, fathers and mothers! how you put off upon *them*, your holy charge—how you trust to catechisms or Sunday Schools, to make your children devout, loving, true and pure. Nothing but the holy altar and sacred hearth-stone of domestic piety and love will ever rightly do that. Jesus “took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and said, of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Would that we understood what *that* meant!

But I have said enough, perhaps; that is, I have detained you long enough; if I were to add another word, it would be to say, that no religion can work powerfully and effectually in us, that does not work rationally, and, I will say, naturally. This old Manichean dread among us of the word, *nature*, is a remarkable thing. Nature is God’s order and law, and to rely upon it is a law of our minds. Let there be any deviation from the ordinary course of nature—let the step of the earthquake jar our dwelling, or the stroke of insanity hang over us, and we are filled with horror. But let nature come into our religion, and it is held to be the fatal sign and signal of *ruin* to the whole system.

I believe in the supernatural. I believe in the miracles of Christ. But when they have attested him to be "a teacher come from God;" when he has spoken to us, and taught us the way, the truth and the life, then must the grace divine work in us according to the laws of our spiritual constitution, or it will never effectually work at all. The religion that is artificial, factitious, made up, unnatural, is not religion; it is superstition, sanctimony, ceremony — no more. Outwardly and inwardly must religion work so, to work well. Prayer, and preaching, and singing of hymns, and baptism, and confirmation, and communion, must be shown and seen to have a natural fitness, in order to have a healthy influence. A communion that is all constraint and demureness is not good; only is it so when it is a natural, free, fresh, earnest participation. But most of all, inwardly, and in the daily life of religion, there must be nature and freedom. I do not desire to see a Christian man who always carries the same face — least of all a solemn one. The gay and the joyous have their place in the right life as truly as the serious and resolved. Always to say what I *must* say — always to do what I *must* do, *because I am a professor, or preacher*, — I would not live such a life for Ophir or India. No, I live in God's world, and am made free and welcome in the house of my Father. No: not form, but substance; not ceremony, but reality; not bondage, but freedom;

not demureness, but freshness and vitality; not repression, but expansion; not to make myself less, but more and more; not to crush myself down in abjectness, but to open my arms wider and wider to the infinite Good—such must be the going forth, in me, of the everlasting life.

S E V E N T H   L E C T U R E.

B Y

R E V. T H O M A S S T A R R K I N G,

P A S T O R O F T H E H O L L I S S T R E E T C H U R C H.



## VII.

### SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY.

---

“NOW WE HAVE RECEIVED NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, BUT THE SPIRIT WHICH IS OF GOD; THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS THAT ARE FREELY GIVEN TO US OF GOD.”—1 Cor. ii. 12.

“THE SPIRIT ITSELF BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD; AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS; HEIRS OF GOD, AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST.”—Romans, viii. 16, 17.

“THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS IN ALL GOODNESS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH.”—Ephesians, v. 9.

THE clergymen who have spoken in the course of lectures that is to be closed to-night, have had each a definite scheme or outline of religious thought to support and commend. I am asked to speak not in exposition or defence of any theological articles or confession, but, so far as I am able, of Spiritual Christianity, which is independent of institutions and systems, which is the substance and soul in all creeds and organizations, which declares itself not through councils and catechisms, but through worship and life, and by which, as a common vitality through diverse fractions, the church, out of many members, is made one body.

Is there any such common penetrative and vivifying Christianity as this? The question is put to us with peculiar emphasis, and should awaken peculiar interest at the close of a series of discourses, in which men of widely different theologies, and all representing modern parties and organizations, too, have been heard. The names, Methodist, Universalist, Episcopalian, Baptist, Unitarian, Calvinist, Congregationalist, have not the savor of antiquity. They stand for organizations and creeds that are of recent date. Not one of them suggests a scheme of religious thought that is coincident with the belief of the church in the first half of the second century. My own conviction is that not one of them clearly interprets and reproduces the theology of St. Paul. The sects which those names represent have all produced men, within this century, as consecrated as any that shine in the annals of saintliness and service,—men equally devoted, out of love to God and man, to the peculiarities of their belief. Yet their creeds are hostile and contradictory, their churches have sometimes been at war, and they are all summarily condemned in dogma and polity as heretic and alien, equally blind, impotent and graceless, by the oldest branch of historic Christendom.

Is there any theory of Christianity that, in spite of doctrinal and ritual diversities, will bring all these parties within the pale of substantial truth, and that

will justify them against the anathema of the oldest and most powerful of the churches? Is there any theory,—not of shallow compromise, emptying Christianity of its deepest significance for the sake of superficial and sterile toleration,—but deep as well as generous, penetrating to the very vitals of the Gospel,—that will accept all these parties, young as they are, discordant as their intellectual confessions seem, and dispose them into a large historic choir of the Spirit?

If Christianity is involved with any precise scheme of dogmas that must be symmetrically proportioned as the condition of its redeeming power, then not more than one sect out of the scores that have attempted to mould Infinite truth can be considered its organ. If it flows only in the channels of institutions, and cannot leap out of the conductors of sacraments and clergy, then no liberal and comprehensive conception of church history can be tolerated; and we must hasten for salvation within the walls which the spirit refuses to overpass. Or, still further, if the mental acceptance of one or two prominent doctrines, such as the Trinity, or the sacrificial death of Jesus as a satisfaction to God or to his law, is indispensable,—if the redeeming energy of the spirit concentrates and restricts itself within the range of belief in these doctrines,—then all Unitarian excellence and experience must be stricken from the trophies and protection

of Christianity, as false blossoms in the vineyard, void of the beauty and the fragrance of grace.

What, then, is to be our starting point, our position of survey over Christendom? Our conception of spiritual Christianity, of its credentials and fruits to-day, and of the partnership in it of unconsonant believers, must be characterised and measured by our estimate of what Christianity was in its origin, what its vital centre was in the Apostolic age, and by what agencies it was to be sustained in society.

To the question of what Christianity was in its origin, only the highest answer, it seems to me, is the adequate answer. It was the communication of life to the race from the heavens. It was not a philosophy, a reaehing up of the human intellect through Jesus, James, and Paul to the attainment of a little higher truth and a little more truth than had been mastered before; but an unsealing of the treasury of the skies, an overflow into time of the Infinite light and grace to illumine and regenerate the world.

We have had in recent years rationalistic explanations, and naturalistic theories of the substance and origin of Christianity. Many of them have been invested with great learning and urged with remarkable ability. They have been provoked, no doubt, by the rigid and superstitious estimates of records and inspiration in the Protestant church; and there can be lit-

tle question that they will lead to a more comprehensive conception of the forces and the historic channels of Christianity than the mind of the Church has ever held. But as an explanation of the Christian religion, and of its relations past, present, and prospective, to civilization and the spiritual life of man, rationalism is unsatisfactory and shallow. Christianity was the communication of divine power to humanity by the unfolding from God of more of the eternal love and truth, and the organization into society of a grace that should strive against all the energies of evil, working as celestial leaven in the earthly meal.

This disclosure of the highest truth from the heavens was first made, this renovating tide into the arteries of a corrupt and collapsing world was first poured, through Jesus Christ. He came that we "might have life, and have it more abundantly." It seems to me that we misunderstand his mission, unless we see that, in his ministry and person, God came by organic contact into history, so that then the great hour of revival and redemption struck for humanity. But we equally misread the characteristics of his faith, if we do not see that he himself never announced any theory of his personality and præexistent rank as vitally connected with his religion,— to be made a test of sound faith, a proper measure of fellowship, or a condition of receiving and transmitting

the regenerating power which he inaugurated among men.

After he passed from the world, the Church began to widen beyond Syrian boundaries and the lines of the Old Testament tradition. And then the greatest of the Apostles published the doctrine, and wrought in the power of it, that the Church was to live by the immediate reception and diffusion of the Holy Spirit. We do not generally appreciate or perceive the sweep and implications of St. Paul's thought in this respect. Christianity, to his mind, was the communication of a power to human souls, through Christ, which revealed God directly as the Father, and wakened the dormant spiritual capacities to intense life. It did this, not by declaring truth abstractly and outwardly, but by lifting the soul into fellowship with the Divine ; making it a joint-heir of God with Christ ; delivering it from bondage to sin and the slavish service of an unsympathetic and blasting law by the supply of a celestial strength that raised it to the disposition of free and joyous consecration to the Infinite love.

How else shall we read these passages from the Epistles ? " We have the mind of the spirit." " Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you." " The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of

God." "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God?" "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Thus Christianity in its first promulgation by St. Paul was a very different thing from a *preceptive* religion. It was not involved at all with questions of documents. It was not implicated with the veracity of every paragraph of memorabilia. It was not pledged to theories of the plenary and verbal inspiration of narratives that differ in a hundred instances of incident and detail. Neither do we find St. Paul honoring the conception which a large class of Unitarians have worked out, that the study of the life of Jesus as an example was to be the practical and redeeming force of the gospel. The four biographies were not written when he preached. His own letters were the earliest documents of our New Testament. And so

it was impossible for him to hold the modern “evangelical” conception of Christianity as *a legacy* of celestial life; of inspiration in archives, and verified by affidavits; and of the New Testament as a parchment protocol of the Holy Ghost, enclosing the finished and final truth on which Christendom is to live forever.

If St. Paul could have looked forward into the eighteenth century from his preaching, how would he have been amazed at the general bondage of the Christian mind. We are taught to regard the gospel as *a will*, published once from heaven, recorded by four transcribers, with various Apostolic codicils, which a believing man is to read over in seasons of despondency. In this way his personal inability to know anything immediately of infinite truth, may be compensated by verbal testimony about God, and his duty, and what Christ once wrought for him, and what definite good is yet in store for him. And thus he may begin or strengthen a life of anticipation, which is what is usually meant by the life of faith! St. Paul could not have dreamed that the church would ever lapse into such a memorial theory of eternal life — into what a living Orthodox writer (living in every sense of the word) has aptly called “a second-hand religion, a notional religion, distant and dry.”

The power and value of Christ to him were that

he had opened new avenues for a direct access of the Divine Spirit to the soul of man. The grace which Christ instituted as the public and constant dispensation from the infinite life for all who were willing to receive it, was of unspeakably more moment to him than the recorded fragments of his earthly biography. He held that Christians were to derive their deepest truth, their comfort and their quickening, and their assurance of eternal things, from that, and not from any cunningly coupled paragraphs of sacred tradition, or collated mosaic-work of texts. Over him, and over the whole Church, in his view, was the cross, or rather the figure of Him who bore its pain, and despised its shame, set in the gloom of the pharisaic and heathen sky. Through that sacred form the beams of Infinite truth poured, with the expression of love, wide over the world. Penitence for sin, and faith in the Ineffable grace, purged the eyes of the soul, pagan or Jew, so that it could see more and more clearly that glorious fissure in the black and chilly night, and be sure of the infinite love by direct vision, and receive its beams into the bosom as a cordial power.

God was no more to the Apostle's thought a dread Monarch, the haughty Czar of the universe, dwelling in unapproachable isolation; no frosty Holiness, reserving himself from the polluting touch of human evil; no omnipotent Chancellor of the moral realm, administering justice according to technical covenants, and hold-

ing a bankrupt humanity to what is “nominated in the bond;” no exclusive Patron of one race, accounting all others abominable and accursed forever; no omniscient and microscopic Critic apportioning His favor according to the nice Pharisaic etiquette of the distant addresses to Him. He was a present, intimate, gracious, and cleansing Spirit. He had cloven the thick firmament of a common iniquity, to come near the dark and alien world with His energy and love. The cross and the form of Jesus set in the zenith of the spiritual heavens were the medium, to give “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” shrouded before, and to publish His common grace to all nations. Through that figure, incorporating and coloring the Infinite glory that blazed behind it, and diffusing it to all the spaces of the moral world, the soul obtained at once the knowledge of the conspiring agencies of redemption,—Father, Son, and Spirit,—and walked in newness of life in an illuminated world.

I must not, and need not, pause here to outline more definitely the Christology of St. Paul, or to refer to subsidiary doctrines in his pages. All that it is now essential for us to see is, that the characteristic of St. Paul’s conception of Christ as a permanent force in the world was the gift of the Spirit, through the ministry and triumph of Christ, as a new organic power upon souls. By the reception of this a man was enabled to live a free, filial, and victorious life in the world. The soul

obtained participation in the Divine life. A faculty higher than the natural understanding was awakened and sustained. A life in the atmosphere of the Spirit was the reward and seal of a real conversion to Christian Truth. Through repentance for sin, and the inmost acknowledgment of Jesus as the representative of Infinite grace, the inward doors of the soul were opened, and windows were set in its prison walls. The very radiance and breath of the Infinite which Christ had brought into the world by his ministry, and for which he had opened larger channels through his cross, his conquest of death, and his ascension, were diffused into the mind, and conscience, and heart of the disciple. He was no longer a servant, but was adopted into the Divine household. It was his privilege then to stand in the same relations towards God that Christ did,—as a son of the everlasting love. By prayer and service the Holy Spirit came into the soul, according to the Apostle's thought, in larger streams. It showed the man his duty by immediate light. It pledged and invigorated his will, and sweetened his affections, and increased his joy. It lifted him above trials and sorrows, and was stronger in him than the whole outward world. He could say “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” It made him sure of God's existence and goodness, of eternity and the love of God in eternity, by present revelation,—

just as the ear is sure of melody, just as the eye is sure of light, and of the deeps of heaven, and the trembling stars. The soul became, as it were, according to another figure of the Apostle, a member or fibre of the very body of Jesus. And it no more needed outward and logical testimony of spiritual things, than the finger, warmed and moved by the life-currents of the heart and the purposes of the brain would need, if it were self-conscious, some external proof that it is in connection with the soul.

This generous and inspiring, yet humbling and searching truth, around which the Church of Christ was organised in the Apostolic days, is the truth by which it is still kept alive. Through this alone it can grow and triumph. When it talks its early and native tongue, Christianity tells us that the soul is the receptacle of the Spirit. It tells us that the purpose of revelation is fulfilled when it has prepared the soul, by cleansing it of the principle of sin, to receive, and rejoice in, and live out the Divine essence and breath. It invites us “to *know* the things that are freely given to us of God.” It shows us that the words of Jesus in the four Gospels, before they were written or uttered, were inward assurances made to his soul of the reality and laws of the spiritual world, of the true and blessed life, and the Eternal love. And it would lift us to a state of heart in which we shall see those words loosened again into light. It would not

only make us believe in the faith of Jesus, but by a faith kindred with his. It would have us stand on the other side of the New Testament, in the light of the spirit that pours through its letters and pages, that we may see the book to be far less than the rays of which its chapters are the media.

The vital reception of Christianity, therefore, in its highest power — a power kindred with that which thrilled St. Paul — is shown in the soul's experience of the nearness and friendship of the Infinite Spirit. When a man comes to the knowledge that God is not far off, but nearer to his soul than He can be to the material world; when he learns that He is not hostile but cordial; that His frown when the heart is alien is the highest mercy and His wrath is grace; when he sees that distance from this Paternal love in the choice of evil is slavery, and wretchedness, and spiritual death, and, with a faith that purifies and justifies at once, pledges himself to the Divine sanctity and compassion for all service and trust; when in the fulfilment of that great vow he lives in a deepening reverence for justice, a regard for truth that grows ever more devout, a sensitive recoil from evil, and above all a love that pours blessings and a sweet atmosphere of charity into society; when still further, feeling that God by His indwelling Spirit is the substance and support of his dearest life, the man sees the whole world illumined, so that the Eternal shines

everywhere through the temporal, and nature is only the vesture or language of Spirit, and nothing is so certain as God's thought and providence in all things; and when such sense of the Infinite and such vision prompt and nourish humility and prayerfulness in the heart, and life becomes a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and a peace which death does not threaten and which sorrow cannot break broods in the sanctuaries of the soul,—then there is an echo in our century to the experience of Paul who found the supreme privilege and bliss of his faith in Jesus in the spring which it stimulated him to make from the earth and its darkness, and the law and its bondage, into the light and the arms of Infinite Grace.

There are very few who reach such a state as this. But we all need it to answer the end of our being, and to satisfy the deepest thirst of an awakened moral nature. We were all born from the Eternal life. And we receive our inheritance only when we begin consciously, and by consecration, to draw our innermost life from God. We feed on husks, we live in shadows, we drink from no undrainable fountains, until the immortal principle is so far stimulated by the Divine quickening, that the germ and promise of such an experience of the infinite life and acceptance is in the soul.

And it matters not *how* the nature acquires that quickening. It matters not by what immediate agency

we are borne up into a consecrated state, and the vision of Divine things, and the joy of the Spirit. It may be by the slow intermixing of grace in domestic education. It may be, in adult years, by deepening experience of unrest in the satisfactions which the world gives when the forces of life are prosperous. It may be by the gnawing sense of bondage in corrupt habits. It may be by the torment bubbling up through memory from some crime. It may be by the pain of bereaved affections. Meditation on the swiftness, the shadows, and the mysteries of existence here, may impel the heart to it. Or some reading of the New Testament, when the letter, instead of encrusting the truth, blazes with immeasurable meaning, may drive the soul to it. Or the study of some devoted man's biography, or the hearing of some awakening religious eloquence, may supply the last stimulant for which the spirit waited. Methods are innumerable. Methods are indifferent. To get the soul aroused, to get the will polarized by the currents of heaven, to get selfishness smitten from conscious or unconscious control of the heart, and love installed there as the vivifying force, to get the man on the side of truth, an organ of justice, a helper of the oppressed, a channel of charity, a pillar of righteousness, a child of God in the dedication of his powers, and a direct recipient of the divine forgiveness, light and favor, by the uncovering of his once shrouded soul to the breath and beams

of the Spirit,—this is what is needed; this, however it be wrought, is what Christ welcomes and rejoices over in the world of substance, as one of the blessed sequences of his ministry; this is a vital appropriation of the truth and grace he instituted; this is a modern victory of the Holy Ghost.

Now, when we see that spiritual Christianity is manifest in a life of freely consecrated service to the Almighty Father, whose character was revealed through Christ, and whose spirit struggles with every soul, we must see that the quickening power of it is not indissolubly involved with any of the dogmas that divide and classify Christendom. A great many persons seem to believe that a conviction of the separate personality of the Holy Spirit is essential to a reception of it. And it is no offence against charity to say that a large portion of the religious teachers in the Protestant world would look with suspicion upon any statement of a Christian faith and experience that is not moulded in the stereotyped vocabulary of the “Evangelical” metaphysics of redemption. The life, however devout and consciously embosomed in the Infinite Spirit, is felt to be spurious if it is not coined into verbal expression out of their pinched glossary of grace. As it is said that a prominent preacher of an antagonistic sect pronounced one of the most devoted men whom the Unitarian Church has nurtured—now gone to his reward—“the best counterfeit of a Chris-

tian that was ever seen." We all need to see that the lexicon of the spirit is a polyglot, and of marvellous compass, too. All the creeds, broken up into words and distributed, would not make a tithe of its vernacular.

In its *first* movement in Christian history the Spirit was unfettered by creeds in the modern sense. St. Paul had no theology, according to our use of that term, and no literature, to impose as law for the Church and as the channel of grace *in the future* of Christendom. He struggled with all his fervor to get the idea of a free and common communication of the Divine Spirit to all races, through a risen head of our humanity, enthroned over the whole Christian mind as its only mental creed and bond. What we call his theology was mostly his interpretation of the religious records and movements of *the past*,—and that for an immediate, pressing and temporary issue. He strove to prove to the Jewish half of the church that, out of their own documents, they were condemned for exclusiveness in denying the equal interest in all nations by the plan of Infinite Providence; that their own historic books and covenants hinted and forecast a grace to be manifested, on terms of faith, and not of blood, to every nation. When this opposition on the part of the Jews and Jewish converts was once removed as a practical embarrassment of the broad and simple organization of Christendom into one moral

body, he would leave the Church in the open day of the Divine Spirit. The most of the book of Romans was aimed as a practical blow at the Pharisaic creed and tradition within the Church; for that stood in the way of the willingness to acknowledge the free dispensation of God's grace and breath to every man, Gentile as well as Hebrew, that was willing to renounce his sins and believe in Eternal love. And St. Paul would have accounted that book perfectly successful in its purpose, if it had left the Church with no dogma but the risen Christ as the representative and channel of a spirit pouring from God into humanity to renew, consecrate, and illumine every nature that would open itself to its power.

And the New Testament documents taken together do not present any shapen, interlocked, symmetrical system of Christianity to the understanding. They were never intended to fix the form, and to configure infinite truth for the *intellect* of a Church that was to endure thousands of years in an advancing civilization. It is very difficult for any scholar, studying the facts without prejudice, to make the philosophy of religion by St. James coincide with that of St. Paul; or the metaphysical estimate of Jesus' rank in St. Mark equivalent with that in St. John; or the conceptions of the church in the Apocalypse and in Galatians identical. We do not get the light of *theological science* in equal clearness, or in harmonious hues, from

those fragments of the primitive thought of the church. But we do get the spirit through them in uniform intensity. They give us truth of the eternal order; heat, and electric currents, and charges from the invisible world, in equal measures. Of what consequence is it how adequately or how accordantly they convey the perceptions of the infinite reason in the mysteries of theology, if they flood us with the deeper truth of the infinite essence; if they are batteries for shedding the "*powers* of the world to come" on the torpid conscience, the disloyal or flaccid will, the corrupt imagination, the withering heart; if they make us feel the holiness, the justice, the unsounded charity of God; if they restore the proportions of things to our *moral* vision, reducing this world to a speck within the soul's world, and curtained from it by a film that may break for us to-morrow?

Ah, how brutally those marvellous records have been treated under our theories of a minute and infallible intellectual inspiration! How men have crushed and cut them to make poetry, and precept, and vision, and mystic vagueness of utterance, and oriental hyperbole, and hot rhetoric for an emergency, and well-weighed judgments, and lyric raptures, fit together like the puzzle-maps of wood with which children play, into an outlined chart of eternal wisdom, consistent and complete! Is it not more reverent and wise to look at those chapters as fragmentary scrolls of an

inspiration that breathed the *forces* and not the *science* of the infinite into the first generation of Christendom? Shall we not see them set around the pure splendor of the Spirit, deeply tinged with different human temperaments, as types of the diverse genius which the gospel has sanctified in history? Shall we not let them show the riches of its light, and pour it, now in the strong moral colors of the Synoptics, now in the paler meditative tints of the fourth biography, now through the literature of faith as the central sentiment, now through the portraiture of a heroic will, now through an unfolded experience of a love that reclines on the sunny bosom of infinite tenderness, now through the rapt longing and expectation of the melting of these flimsy time-walls, to let in the fierce justice and final peace of the millennial day?

Are we told that these records are all in unison, since they all make Christ the centre of their theology, and the channel of the highest truth and mercy? So they do. But shall we not see through what different visions of his outline and majesty the spirit streamed upon them? There is the Prophet-Christ of Matthew; the Logos-Christ of John; the Ethnic and Mediatorial Christ of Paul; the Judicial Christ of James; the Priestly Christ of the Hebrews; the administrative and imperial Christ of Revelations, with eyes as a flame of fire, and seven stars in his right hand. Through these conceptions of the Son of Man, equally vivid,

but drawn on unequal scales of official grandeur, and variously hued, the redeeming truth gushed into the souls of the earliest teachers of Christendom, and then into the church. It was prophetic thus of the fulness of nourishment in Christianity for all temperaments, and the freedom to be granted to all future ages in conceiving of the proportions of Christ as the channel of the Holy Ghost.

And we have a right to say now, in the interest of vital Christianity, that all theories of Christ's rank and office, and all catechism and creeds, are *indifferent* to the Spirit, so far as they belong to the speculative science of the Infinite, or to the philosophical interpretation of Scripture. This is the great question: how near is the man to the Spirit of God? how closely does the Christ he believes in bring him to the Infinite? how richly does he interpret to him the character of the Almighty — his equity, his providence, his interest in righteousness, his love? It is *working* truth, truth for redemption, truth that cleanses the passions, truth that burns the clouded conscience, truth that wrenches the cowardly will, truth that knocks at the heart with sweet and serious pleading, in which the spirit hides. A notional Trinity or a notional Unity it cares not for, any more than it cares for your conception of how many strata are in the surface of the globe, or how the sun's light is connected with his substance.

When the doctrine of the Trinity represents to you,

and brings to a focus upon your soul, the truths that God is the substance and patron of all law and righteousness, that He is unspeakably hostile to all evil, that He has come into history through a perfect form of our humanity to break the power of evil, and that His spirit is now the quickening impulse of all private excellence and public good,—you believe in a religion essentially true, a perfect religion. And if you feel that a change in that conception of the Infinite to a belief in the Unity of the divine nature would make God more distant, and the authority of Christianity less potent, and its grace more pallid, and the earth a less serious and sacred spot in immensity, then, although I were sure that the statement of the divine Unity is true, I should pray heaven that you might not be brought to see it; for you would only gain a truth of arithmetic, and might lose a truth of life. But if you find that your Unitarian neighbor feels the Spirit of God no less near, and His law no less sacred, and His love no less deep, and Christianity no less manifestly a movement of grace, through his conception of Christ; and if his life is no less consecrated, and pours out no less of integrity, and bounty, and filial fragrance, do you not see that the Spirit passes through his dogma to his heart, just as it has through yours?

There may be fifty *doctrines* of the Spirit; as there may be fifty theories of the light, and of how it is gene-

rated from the sun, and of how its beam is stranded, and of how fast it travels to the earth, and of how it gains entrance to the human eye. There is only one *science* of the spirit; as there is only one science, or accurate conception of the origin, structure, speed and office of the sunshine. But the fact of the presence of the light, of its institution in this world, through the sun, by providential goodness, and of the equal dependence of every body upon it for sight and enjoyment, are not altered by the theories which human beings hold. We all live in the vast natural church of light, whether we have Newton's conception, or Young's conception, or Goethe's conception of its cause and composition; nay, whether or not we have cared to work out any conception of these. And the man with the inadequate theory, or the false theory, or no theory, *sees* just as well as the man with the true one, if he conforms to the practical laws of vision.

It is the spiritual truth which looks through the creed that is the all-important element so far as the person is concerned. Ah, we cannot tell by the written confession what the vital characteristics of the man's faith or of his belief are. St. Paul determined to know no other formula than the Cross of Christ. But what did it mean to him? We have seen that it meant the breaking out of divine love towards all mankind; it meant the equal spiritual rights of all races; it meant a perfect moral providence; it meant

the condemnation of Pharisaism as high treason against humanity; it meant the abolition of all covenant-grace; it meant that humility, charity, self-sacrifice, is the law of the moral universe; it meant that men need no more pine here as prisoners, but could burst through faith "into the air of that supernatural life which God lives eternally." In a word, it meant just the opposite of the system into which the old school Calvinism has petrified the book of Romans. The cross of Christ is thus preached now in the Trinitarian Church by men like Bushnell, and Kingsley, and Maurice, and Robertson, and Stanley, and is interpreted thus by theologians like Jowett, and scholars like Bunsen; and it is the sign of the purest faith and most adequate conception of Christianity in our time. Other men preach the cross of Christ, and it means horror more than inspiration, wrath more than grace, doom more than deliverance, partiality instead of universality, Infinite hatred more than pity; for the little light that leaks through it into history from the heart of Christ, and falls upon the sparse elect, only relieves the black background of Omnipotent law, and enables us to take the awful censūs of the damned.

We repeat that it is the spiritual expression that steals through our dogma, the fulness with which it interprets the holy character and searching influence of God, the nearness it makes us feel of the Eternal world to our world, and not simply its logical accuracy,

that attests the vital presence of the Spirit in it. The soul is reached religiously by methods of art, rather than by methods of science. It is the amount of quickening truth with which our creed is translucent that helps us,—just as it is the sweetness and depth of saintly beauty, and not the literal, historic, or possible verity of the person or the scene, that moves us in one of Raffaelle's groups, and advances art. If the doctrine of an evil nature makes you feel more intensely the wrong, wretchedness, and peril of sin, and makes you a watchful and prayerful man, you are practically nearer to the truth than your Unitarian friend who denies the Church doctrine of the fall of Adam, holds that sin is a personal perversion of the will, and has no deep consciousness of the guilt and poverty of alienation from God. He holds, I should say, the secular truth of the case; you the internal and essential truth. But with his convictions, even though they be erroneous, if he is no less sensitive than you to a violation of truth, to a stain on his integrity, to passing an uncharitable judgment, or circulating a slander, or bolstering iniquity by a vote, or being found in any way hostile to God, and keeps his soul open to the divine life for purification and strength,—both of you have the essential truth. The Spirit is equally near you. It uses your dogma with equal readiness, and with indifference to its philosophic validity or weakness.

I do not argue that truth of creed is unimportant

I do not say that a symmetrical and pure theology, an adequate intellectual interpretation of the office of Christ and the meaning of Christianity, is not a most desirable thing. But I say that unless a man values and uses his conception of Christ, or his creed, as a medium of the Spirit, as a lens to condense the radiance of the everlasting world upon his soul, a *perfect* surface-belief is of no account. Some creeds have truth and little power; others have power and very little truth. The men of science tell us now that there is a very subtle chemical energy in the sun-ray—as it were the soul of it—which is different from its light-giving and its heating properties. Certain glasses stained dark-blue will admit scarcely any light, and yet will offer no interruption to the passage of this mysterious force. On the contrary a yellow glass, which transmits almost undiminished the intensity of the light, will completely cut off this chemical principle, whatever it be. So we cannot fail to see how some head-creeds of darkest blue, that one would think must make the universe dismal and life a bitter bondage, will transmit the vital effluence of the Holy Spirit to many a believer's heart. While other people may diffuse and live in the full intellectual radiance of a true philosophy of the Gospel, and receive through it nothing of that thrilling energy which is twisted in with the pure light of Eternity, and in which the Gospel attests its power. So that the important

question is, not what we think of the Holy Spirit, but what the Spirit thinks of us, and of the truth we have worked into form. Does God use it for his regenerative purposes? Does He make it the medium of His most secret and quickening grace?

Of course, we ought to have both pure light and vital power. The success of Christianity as a *general* force, is obstructed sadly, I believe, by the false interpretations of Scripture, the harsh metaphysics of God and his government, and the distorted philosophy of the spiritual world and of life, that are preached in connection with it. There are thousands within the fold of the Trinitarian organizations who are regenerated by the spirit that finds its way through their bitterest formulas. The intellectual grimness of the formulas is pushed into the background for them. But we ought not to overlook the fact that other thousands are repelled from religion, and are either made more worldly, or are driven out into a cold natural goodness, by the intellectual extravagances of utter depravity, and a selfish Infinite, and an arbitrary doom of eternal punishment for a single sin, which the creeds exhibit to their reason, and which will stand out in the foreground. For every person that will be turned to a reverent and devoted life by the revival that so many good men in the sacrificial church are now rejoicing over, it is doubtless true that two at least have been alienated from real Christianity by its distorted the-

ology. Many of these have been restored, wholly or in measure, through the agency of such intellectual conceptions of life, and Jesus, and the Almighty Father, as Channing preached. We should bear this in mind when we are taking into account the wide relations of the Church to society, and when the fervors of the prominent Trinitarian sects are contrasted complacently with the coldness of the Liberal Christian administration of religion.

If we could have the Orthodox earnestness poured through a corrected scheme of doctrine,—a scheme that allows more scope for the influence of the Holy Spirit than the earlier English Unitarianism did, and which rises to the high temperature of St. Paul's feeling as to its striving, convincing, irradiating, sweetening presence; a doctrine fusing the essential conceptions of Chalmers, Marténeau and Arnold,—we should have a revival of religion whose statistics could not be grouped by hundreds. The heart of the nation would respond to it like the verdure of May after April rain.

And now it is time to ask what relation Christianity, considered as the diffusive agency of the Divine Spirit, bears to *institutions*. Some men cannot disconnect—their theory will not allow them to disconnect—the religion of Jesus from a priestly order of men, a system of government, rituals in churches, and visible lines of division between a party with Christian badges on them, and the unregenerate mass of the

world. This conception is wrought out in full proportions in the Catholic theory of a separate spiritual polity in civilization.

When a Catholic talks with you about the Church of Christ as a social power, he means nothing more, and he cannot conceive how anything else can be meant by it, than the miraculous diffusion of Divine grace through Pope, Bishops, Decrees, Clergy, Sacraments, to those people who believe in Pope, and Clergy, and Sacraments, and who go to them regularly for help and nutriment. The visible organization of the Church is, to the devout Catholic, the immense and divine-built battery for the spiritual electricity of heaven. And no one can receive a stream or spark of it, until he visibly joins hands with the faithful around the Altar, and obtains it from the magical touch of the Priest.

Most of the Protestant sects, though their theories are far less imposing than this one of the Roman hierarchy, still cling to the idea — some with greater, some with less fulness of proportion in their schemes — that Christianity has some material channels which are divinely instituted (and so as precious as the religion itself) through which its saving virtue pours. The Church of Christ to them is still, in some sense, a Corporation. And a man in becoming a part of it must pass visibly, by some act or profession before men, from the side of the world where there is no grace, to

the ecclesiastical side where help is ready for him, if he fulfils the conditions on which it is offered.

Over these conceptions of Christianity must be set such an estimate of institutions as will fit the fact that the gospel of Christ has been put into society as an all-penetrating force of social redemption. See how Jesus always interpreted the action and the future of the regenerative power concentrated in him through imagery drawn from the most free and diffusive energies in nature. That spirit that vivifies the world, moves like *the wind*,—no more to be included within the boundaries of sect and sacrament, than the wind can be encompassed by cathedrals and council-domes. Again, the forces of his truth are *seeds*, scattered not over a few ecclesiastical acres, but over the field of the world, to be nourished by the unsectarian light and rain. And “the kingdom of God is *within* you,” so that the power of it in the world is exactly equal to the truth, and the sweetness, and the aspiration, and the devotion to God and man, that hide as qualities in human bosoms, and stream as influence from them into society. Still further, “the kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.” It works not from an organized, visible, and aggressive centre, but as an interpenetrating, vivifying force. You cannot mechanically separate the vitality from the dead resistance. It works by secret agency to make each particle alive, and a new germ of life.

The Christianity of the Spirit, therefore, is the sum of all the redeeming life-forces in our civilization. Nothing less than all the arteries of society are its ducts. Since the day of Pentecost the renovating forces of history are its vesture. Just as the quickening element of the Gospel is not dogma, and will not be imprisoned in dogma, but will look through it and stream through it even when it is unsymmetrical and ungracious,—so it is not an ecclesiastical institution, and will not be imprisoned in any or all of them. But it uses them all for its purposes: Mediæval, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Moravian, Congregational, Quaker, and countless other agencies besides.

For social worship there must be, of course, some special rites, and order, and bonds; and those in which different classes of believers feel most free, and find most joy, are best for them. Yet the Spirit is not pledged to any order as a polity for Christendom. And where the most symmetrical order and liturgy become an occasion of complacency, and pride, and aristocratic schism of the heart from the community of believers, the polity is not of the Spirit at all. It is an encroachment of "this world," an entrenchment of the "natural man" within the area that is supposed to be especially consecrated to Christ. Apostolical succession, for instance, is no more possible as a law for the Church than an equivalent theory would be in the world of Art. Think of trying to institute in such a

way, the right and the gift of teaching beauty ! Think of a hierarchical pretension in the artistic world, claiming that only the students upon whom Raffaelle, or Michael Angelo, or Murillo, or Rubens, or Reynolds, or West, or Turner, or Allston, had laid his hands, were rightfully consecrated and equipped to paint, and to educate the taste of men ! By all means have studies, and studios, and thorough intercourse with the master-pieces of ages. But leave room for genius,—its freedom, its new methods, and its fire. And do not try to conduct the potent and volatile essence of inspiration which flows only from the laying on of God's hand, along the fixed methods of any confederation.

The spirit broods over *society* to vitalize it, and not exclusively over the church. That is especially the church where the most power is present. Let us not think that the Infinite grace has followed the method for distributing His Gospel, which men have adopted to secure a supply of water for this city from the neighboring lake. He has not mechanically laid water-pipes of altar, ritual and liturgy, to transmit and diffuse it in unchanging ways to every soul. His are rather the methods in His church, by which the bounteous rain is distributed and stored. It falls on the mountain slopes; it collects in rills; it combines into streams and rivers; it hides underground, and bubbles in fountains. Now it floods all its channels; now it leaves the old beds to cut new paths for its

leaping music; and it will often burst up in fresh districts to gladden the ground with beauty.

So the Spirit has not shown itself partial to any organization of ecclesiastical order. It leaves the old Catholic corporation, to stimulate the world through Luther and the Reformers. And it is just as ready to break out again through the Catholic forms, and retreat from Protestant ones, when any branch of the elder church puts itself in the condition to invite its grace, and the new church prefers to live on memory, and begins to be proud, formal, and cruel. It delights to pour itself through preaching and the Sunday, just to the extent that the preacher has a receptive soul, and the people have hearing hearts. It streams through the holiest sacrament, and most freely when those that commune offer life as a service of thanksgiving and sacrifice to the Infinite love in the spirit of Christ, and ask for more of its breath. But we must not forget that it leaps out of a church as freely as into it. It makes a good book its channel rather than a proud bishop, though the book be written by an unprofessing layman. It discharges immeasurably more of its essence through such a novel as "Little Dorritt" than through such volumes as Dr. Breckinridge's "Knowledge of God objectively considered." It no more acknowledges a religious newspaper as its organ than a secular one, if it is not humbly edited, and does not increase the sway of meekness and charity.

in those that read it,—a very severe test for many of them. A useless and juiceless church-member, expending his energies and prayers on his own salvation, adds to its working force about as much as a lump of ice serves as an organ of heat, or a piece of charcoal as a reflector of the light. It moves through all the efforts, all the eloquence, all the literature, all the homes, all the charity organizations, all the laws, all the public bounties, that are interpreting sweet and serious truth, nourishing goodness, spreading the sway of the spirit of sacrifice, banishing injustice, making the world less selfish, and more pious. For these are hastening the true Millennium, when all law, all government, all literature, all life shall be pure and reverent and charitable; and when society shall be organized by Christ's spirit, and become the Church, and thus the whole lump be leavened.

We have seen, thus far, that Christianity was the infusion of new life from God through Jesus Christ, and the pouring of His spirit into humanity as a public grace. Its first medium was the conception of Jesus in his risen glory as the representative of a redeemed humanity, the mirror of the Divine love, and the diffusing channel of the Holy Spirit, to all who were willing by direct faith in the Infinite Father through him, to begin a filial life. We have seen that it was not involved with any metaphysics of the Heavenly world, or of depravity, or of the commer-

cial, legal, or governmental value of Christ's suffering, or with any rigid philosophical system, or with any ecclesiastical institutions and polity as a final law for Christendom. We have seen that Christianity, in its inmost and its primal power, is manifest in any man, whatever his belief, who feels the Divine Spirit as his light and joy, and serves and worships God, through the gracious coloring which the character of Jesus has cast upon the All-perfect One, in consecrated fidelity and trust, and as a lover of his kind.

Here, therefore, we have something to say upon the development of the life and thought of Christendom and the meaning and usefulness of sects. The Church was left unhampered by creeds from the pen of Jesus, or of Apostles, to work out its science of theology freely,—as all science is worked out through error, through cumulative effort, and through failure,—and to add to the riches of its vital literature by a manifold and ever multiplying experience. We are *in the era* of the Spirit, and the Church is to-day under the pressure and guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The theology which the church has as yet amassed, is not to be accounted specially venerable and authoritative by reason of age and rescription. For the intellect of the race has not, until recently, had favorable conditions to apply itself powerfully and without

prejudice to the science of the Divine mind, of the soul, and of the relations of the eternal world to time. Most of the leading tenets of our popular theology in their intellectual shape belong to the darker ages of Christian history. The conception of the Trinity was not perfected till many generations after the Apostles, when the shadow was stealing over ancient civilization that was to produce a full eclipse. And it was not until the close of the eleventh century that our “evangelical” doctrine of the atonement was clearly stated by Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury. These are the vital centres of the popular faith. What has grown up thus in time, and without satisfying the intellect of universal Christendom, (for the mind of the church has been so fretted and tormented by those dogmas that it does not lie long at ease on any shaping of them) may perish in time. Christendom is young. Look forward a hundred centuries, and see if you can imagine that the intellect of the Church will then be tethered to the metaphysics of religion shaped before modern science and philosophy and poetry were born. We cannot tell yet what the theology of Christendom is to be. The sects that have arisen thus far have each helped, through their differences, to accumulate evidence, by appearing as witnesses or counsel in the court of history for some oppressed or slighted truth.

But the sects have done a greater service by show-

ing us, with more and more varied and copious illustration, how deep and rich, how sweet and sublime, is spiritual Christianity itself, when it issues in its appropriate literature of sentiment and life. Lord Bacon spoke of the ample and graceful classic mythology as the airs of earlier ages breathed into the trumpets and pipes of the Grecians. So Christianity, of which the Spirit struck the key-notes in the souls of Apostles in Palestine, has been widening in variation and deepening in harmony with all the consecrated temperaments that have risen in the ages thus far to articulate its airs. We must pierce below the creed-symbols of each party in Christian history, and find the justification and necessity of its existence in the fresh quality of its sentiment, or the new movement or modulation by which it has enriched the compass of the symphony of grace. Think of the range of the literature of Christian devoutness and insight. It runs from the "Shepherd of Hermas" and the prayers of the earliest liturgies, touching different keys in different centuries and sects, till it includes now Augustine's Communion with God, à Kempis' Imitation of Christ, Tauler's Sermons, the Meditations of Archbishop Leighton and Bishop Hall, Fenelon's Letters, Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, Baxter's Saints' Rest, Swedenborg's Divine Love and Wisdom, Edward's sweet thoughts of Christ, Wesleyan hymns, Martineau's Endeavours after the Christian Life, Theodore Parker's Ten Sermons, and New-

man on the Soul. That belongs to essential Christianity, spiritual Christianity, which issues in the quickening power of these books, and gleams out in the life of all consecrated men, whether they be men of action, of suffering, or of prayer. All are necessary to enable us to appreciate Christianity. For it is continually unfolding itself in history. And the Spirit needs every aperture of race, and temperament, and culture, to work out fully the mighty theme whose notes are printed in the first Scriptures of the church.

The growth of the church as the interpreter of Christianity through the ages thus far seems to me the gradual building of a majestic organ. The final justification of each sect is found when we can regard it as a new stop, or class of pipes, with an original constitution and quality, to pour out some essential sentiment with nobler volume, or richer melody, in response to the glory of God. It is the Spirit that struggles and sings through all. Some articulate, perhaps, the more necessary, others the more ornamental phrasings of everlasting truth. No sect alone can yield the full-proportioned music. The Calvinistic creed may not agree with the intellectual truth of things. Possibly no consecutive or selected propositions of it will. But there is a severity and stringency in the law of God and its hold upon us, that justifies the solemn and often hoarse sub-bass which we catch predominantly from the Calvinistic pipes. While we are under sin,

such is the ground-tone of the truth of things. If you say that the law arbitrarily dooms a soul to eternal woe, you misinterpret it; if you strike it from your conception of the universe, you debilitate the Gospel, and strike out the *pedal* terrors, that, none the less for Christ's coming, roar around a deliberately evil choice.

The Methodist cluster of pipes waken for us, when they are opened, more of the gamut of grace. We draw them for the hallelujahs. Some stops are ranged for the mystic melodies that flow from the key-note of the Gospel of John. There are wailing pipes to tell of a depravity of human *life*, dreadful as the plummet of Augustine ever sounded; and to balance them the reeds of cheer so publish the glory of human *nature* high and lustrous as the vision that charmed the upward look of Channing. There is the practical range answering to that solid substance in true religion which no moralists, wedded to the Epistle of James, can set forth too roughly. And there are keys to interpret the correspondences between the celestial and the visible world, which are as penetrating and comprehensive as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the uncounted volumes of Swedenborg would disclose. Others are the Duleiana stops to sprinkle the sweetness of the Gospel. And surely the truth of the love of God, his patient, pleading, never-tiring love, is sweet as the most trusting Universalism, the Viol d'Amour stop in Christendom, ever breathed. The

Universalists may be wrong in plentiful instances in their rendering of texts, and the combination of proofs for their doctrine from Scripture ; but in this sentiment, and in their faith that the love of God for each soul will last as long as His justice, and as long as eternity, they are not wrong. Only, both the truths must go together. The grace and the bass must interblend, one giving body to the other,—neither must be hampered by fetters of time, or interpreted in regard to time,—before you get the true harmony of the Spirit.

And now, if I may gather up all that I have been trying to say through this too long discourse in a statement suggested by this last symbol of the organ, let me say that only those elements of the faith and life of every church that can pass up into anthems, chants, and hymns, as an offering to the Infinite,—only those sentiments which can be set to music,—are its worthy and enduring elements. You cannot put proofs of the Trinity, or controversial supports of the Unity of God,—the logic of Bishop Bull, or the arguments of Professor Norton,—into hymns. You cannot put the difference between a feeling of the depravity of nature, and of the depravity of conduct and life, into a Psalm. When three souls feel equally the riches of Infinite love, though one receives it through a Trinitarian, another through an Arian, another through a Humanitarian dogma, you could not put their disputes about the size of the win-

dow through which they obtain their light, into a chorus. You cannot chant rubries, and the hostilities of catechisms, and thirty-nine Articles, and Canons of the Council of Trent, and condemnatory clauses of the Athanasian creed.

But reverence for God, devout prostration before the law which "the Father" represents; penitent love answering to the pity and sacrifice which "The Son" interprets, and devotion to humanity out of such consecration; joy in the ever-present grace, and prayer for the quickening life which "The Spirit" symbolizes; adoration of Infinite holiness, submission to Infinite sovereignty, grateful trust in Infinite compassion,—sentiments in which, when developed free, Trinitarian and Unitarian, Calvinist and Arminian, Partialist and Universalist, come at once into fellowship,—these fly to music for expression.

We shall drop our contentions about Trinity and Unity, about free will and constraining election, when we reach heaven. We may not understand, even to eternity, the constitution of the Infinite personality; but alienations on account of mental measurings of substantial truth will not obtain there. There will be no reverend Angels to preach on such themes as, Why am I a Calvinist, a Baptist, or an Episcopalian? But no doubt we shall still be ranged there, as here, by the sentiments to which we most naturally give utterance. And we shall see there, doubtless, what need

there is of the utmost power of every party to celebrate the circle of the Divine glory; how deep is the justice, how broad the providence, how high the love, that must be acknowledged in the twined harmony of heavenly hosannas.

Let us pray that we may yield our mind and will to the Spirit; that by its light we may see through our creeds into the all-important verities of the substantial world; that we may be in life and worship instruments of Christian music, more than soldiers of Calvinistic or Unitarian camps; and that we may be lifted, at last, by the Spirit to that world where we shall experience the truth that, “whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away” before the charity that “never faileth,” which gives the “unity of the Spirit,” and is “the fulfilling of the law.”











